CENTURY TYPES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

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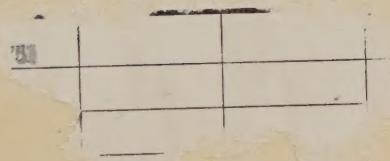
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Century Types

of

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Century Types of
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Chronologically Arranged.

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PREFACE

Century Types of English Literature has been prepared in the hope that it will fill what the editors believe has been a long-felt want in survey courses in English literature. In such courses the use of an anthology is already very general and is becoming every year more so. The expense of separate texts and the difficulty of obtaining the books wanted—when they are wanted—are everywhere felt. As an alternative to separate texts, however, the anthologies in general use do not provide a precise equivalent. They are based rather on the principle of offering relatively brief extracts from a great many works instead of complete texts in a more limited number. And admirable as these extracts are, they do not, in the opinion of many instructors, give the student, except in lyrics and short pieces, a conception of works of literature as a whole. It is to meet this objection that the present anthology is offered.

The fundamental aim has been to give in every case complete works, or where this is obviously impossible (as in *The Faerie Queene* or *Paradise Lost,* for example) as many complete cantos or books as the student would ordinarily be asked to read in a general course. Where a section is made up of separate pieces (such as "The Ballad" or "The Essay") the plan has been to include an amount of material approximating that found in separate editions prepared for school and college use. In some cases where this amount seemed excessive for a survey course, the section has been slightly curtailed; but an effort has been made in every case to include an ample representation of the type or of the author's work. The section devoted to Boswell's *Life of Johnson,* as stated in the table of contents, is an abridgment such as is familiar in numerous separate editions prepared for class use.

It is hoped that the arrangement of material according to types will give to a number of assignments a unity which in many cases is otherwise felt by the student to be lacking. But since such a plan does not interfere in any way with the chronological arrangement of the book, it will not affect the usefulness of the anthology in courses where the types are not especially stressed. The introductions to the various sections have been limited generally to one page in clear type,—which the student may be induced to read. They aim to give him what he needs to know about the type, the work, the period to which it belongs, and the author,—that is, what he needs to know in order to read the section intelligently. Notes and glosses have been put at the foot of the page. Except where a certain fullness was desirable (as in the Chaucerian texts) they have been restricted as much as seemed wise.

A word may be said as to the choice of material. The plan for the book was

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presented to the publishers seven years ago and was submitted at that time and on various occasions since to those giving survey courses in numerous colleges throughout the country. The editors wish to express their gratitude to all who have contributed to make the book a more useful text. But the selection in general represents the experience of the editors, extending over many years, in giving the survey course to large classes. They have gone on the principle that literature is to be enjoyed (even in college) before it is taught, and that it is the purpose of such a course to give the student not only good literature, but good literature of a kind that his age and knowledge of life will enable him to understand. Only in this way will the large number in whom a habit of reading is not yet formed be given a taste for books and will those who have it already continue to like to read. In one or two sections the discretion of the instructor will determine whether a given class is ready for the selection presented. A special feature is the effort to do justice to that fine body of literature produced by contemporary writers. No pains have been spared to make these sections thoroughly representative.

One or two omissions should be explained. No play of Shakespeare's is included because texts of his plays are so easily accessible everywhere, and because different instructors generally want different plays. Instead, a non-Shakespearean play has been included for comparison. Also no novel is included, for reasons of length, and it is the belief of the editors that a novel should be read as a whole. But for those who wish to include one or more novels in their course, a word may be said. If space were in no wise a consideration, the editors would have included as many novels as they have included plays, and in this quixotic scheme they would have chosen to represent some of the following types: the epic in prose: *Tom Jones,* by Henry Fielding; the historical romance: *Kenilworth,* by Sir Walter Scott; the humanitarian novel: *David Copperfield,* by Charles Dickens; the novel of social satire: *Vanity Fair,* by W. M. Thackeray; the psychological novel: *The Mill on the Floss,* by George Eliot; and the novel of local color: *Far from the Madding Crowd,* by Thomas Hardy. Where the instructor so desires, one or more of these might be included in planning the reading for the course.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the indebtedness which the editors have incurred in the course of their work. In particular a special gratitude is felt by Mr. Baugh (who assumes all responsibility for the translation of *Beowulf*) to Professor Fr. Klaeber, of the University of Minnesota, whose definitive edition of the poem not only furnished the basis of the text, but who read the translation in proof with painstaking care and made many valuable comments and suggestions. Professor Klaeber is in no wise responsible, however, for any mistakes which the translator has fallen into or any particular interpretations of disputed passages which he has ventured. Thanks are due to Professors Percy V. D. Shelly and Matthew W. Black of the University of Pennsylvania for generously reading the translation in proof and suggesting numerous stylistic improvements. The editors wish to express their gratitude to Professor Cornelius Weygandt for much valuable advice in compiling the last three sections of the book. Without his fine appreciation of good literature

wherever found and his unsurpassed knowledge of contemporary literature in all its phases, these sections would have been infinitely poorer. And to all their other colleagues at Pennsylvania who have shown such a generous and helpful interest in the book they express their heartiest thanks.

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CENTURY TYPES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE FOLK EPIC: BEOWULF

An epic is a long narrative poem treating of great actions, with the characters well defined. When traditions which have been in circulation among a nation, often for a long time, in ballads and lays, are gathered together and crystallized into a great narrative poem by some poet or succession of poets, we have the "folk epic" or "epic of growth." Such are the *Iliad,* the *Niebelungen Lied,* and *Beowulf.*

In an epic of this sort it is generally desirable that the effect of unity be achieved by confining the action to one great event and the circumstances connected with it. In *Beowulf,* however, the story falls into two distinct parts: (1) Beowulf's fights with Grendel and Grendel's mother, and (2) his struggle long afterwards with the dragon. An interval of fifty years separates the two actions, but they are held together by the character of the hero, whose life as a whole is of such interest that the reader passes from one adventure to the other without feeling any lack of continuity.

The theme of the poem is of Scandinavian origin and the setting is Scandinavian. Beowulf is of the Geats, a tribe settled in what is now southern Sweden, and comes to the royal court of Denmark to assist King Hrothgar against his mysterious foe. Allusion to events which took place in Scandinavian countries between 450 and 530 make it almost certain that the traditions found in the poem were current among the Angles on the continent and were brought to England at the time of their migration thither in the sixth century. The poem was composed between 700 and 750 A.D., probably in the northern part of England. The manuscript in which it is preserved dates from about the year 1000. The original is in four-stress, alliterative verse.

Since *Beowulf* was written at such a time—only one hundred and fifty years after the introduction of Christianity into the island—it is not strange that pagan beliefs and Christian allusions jostle each other in a way that strikes the casual reader as incongruous. But the Christian element is an inseparable part of the poem, and the references reveal just that simple conception which a pagan people might have of a belief that had recently broken in on their established philosophy of life without by any means destroying it.

Beowulf is the greatest work in Old English literature. It is a splendid story of adventure, an invaluable picture of Anglo-Saxon life, and a fitting embodiment of the ideals of valor and honor, unflinching devotion to duty and unfailing loyalty between men, which are so fine a part of Old English life.

BEOWULF

Hwæt, we Gar-Dena in geardagum,
þeodcyninga þrym gefrunon,
hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon!
Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum,
monegum mægþum meodosetla ofteah,
egsode eorlas, syððan ærest wearð
feasceaft funden; he þæs frofre gebad,
weox under wolcnum weorðmyndum þah,
oð þæt him æghwylc ymbsittendra
ofer hronrade hyran scolde,
gomban gyldan; þæt wæs god cyning!

OF HROTHGAR'S ANCESTORS

Lo, we have heard of the glory in days of old of the Spear-Danes, of the kings of the people, how the athelings did deeds of valor!

Oft Scyld Scefing reft bands of hostile folk, many a tribe, of their seats in the mead-hall, terrified earls, after he was first found destitute. Yet for all that, he lived to know consolation, prospered on earth and grew rich in honors, till each of his neighbors over the whale-road[1] must obey him and pay him tribute. That was a good king!

To him thereafter a son was born, young in the house, whom God sent as a help to the people; He knew the dire distress that erst they had suffered, kingless a long while. Therefore the Lord of Life, Heaven's Ruler, gave him honor on earth: Beowulf[2] was renowned—his fame leaped far—Scyld's son in Scedeland. In such a way shall a young man bring it about by kindness, by gifts of treasure from his father's store, that in his age willing companions may stand by him, his people serve him, when war comes. Among all nations a man shall surely thrive by praiseworthy deeds.

Then at the appointed time Scyld, full of might, went into the Lord's keeping. They bore him, his own dear companions, to the sea's waters, as he himself bade while this friend of the Scyldings still had the power of words. The beloved prince had ruled long. There in harbor stood the ring-prowed ship, ice-covered and eager to go, a hero's boat. They laid then their dear lord, giver of rings, in the bosom of the ship, the glorious one beside the mast. From afar were brought many treasures and rich trappings. Never heard I of a ship fitted out more nobly with armor and weapons of war, swords and byrnies; on his breast lay heaped-up treasures that should go with him far into the flood's keeping. No less did they furnish him with gifts and folk-hoardings, than did those who at his birth sent him forth alone, a child over the waves. And besides, they set up a golden banner high above his head, let the waters bear him, gave him up to the sea. Theirs was a sorrowful heart, a mournful mood. In truth, men cannot say —rulers in hall, heroes under heaven— who received that burden.

[1] The whale-road is the sea. Old English poetry is characterized by bold metaphors and a certain indirect way of saying things that one must become accustomed to. The "product of files" is a sword, the "play of swords" a battle, the "battle seat" a saddle, and the "protector of earls" is the king. After a very little reading these figures cause no trouble. One other feature of Old English poetry is still noticeable in a translation. This is a certain parallelism of thought, to which the stichic character of the verse especially lends itself, and a repetition that results in a heaping up of synonyms and appositional elements until often they appear awkward to the modern reader. This quality of the style is better adapted to slow chanting aloud than to our modern method of rapid reading with the eye alone.

[2] Not the hero of the poem, who was Beowulf of the Geats.

I

THE BUILDING OF HEOROT. GRENDEL'S HATRED

Long ruled, then, in the palace Beowulf of the Scyldings, beloved king of the folk, famous among nations—his father had passed hence, the lord from his home—until in time the mighty Healfdene was born to him. He ruled the people as long

as he lived, full of years and fierce in battle. To him, the leader of hosts, four children in all were born in the world, Heregar and Hrothgar and Halga the good; the fourth I have heard was Onela's queen, consort of Heatho-Scylfing.

Then was success in war, glory in strife, given to Hrothgar, so that his followers gladly obeyed him, until the young host increased, a mighty company. It came into his mind that he would have a hall built, have men build a greater mead-hall than children of men ever heard of, and therewithin deal to young and old all that God gave him save the people's land and the lives of men. Then, as I heard, work was ordered far and wide of many tribes throughout this earth, to make fair the dwelling place. In due time it came to pass, speedily among men, that it was in all things ready, the greatest of halls. He named it Heorot, he whose word had power afar. Nor did he forget his promise, but bestowed rings, treasure at the feast. The hall towered high and broad-gabled. It waited for the hostile flames, the hateful fire;[1] nor yet was it long before war was to spring from the bitter enmity of father and son-in-law.

Then the mighty demon that dwelt in darkness endured with difficulty the time that he heard each day loud rejoicing in the hall. There was the sound of the harp, the clear song of the scop.[2] He spoke who knew how to relate from far back the creation of mankind, told how the Almighty created the earth, the beautiful land which the water surrounds, and, rejoicing in his work, set the sun and moon as lamps for light to land-dwellers, and adorned the regions of the earth with branches and leaves; life also he shaped for each race of those that live and move about. So mid rejoicing the tribesmen lived happily till a fiend in Hell began to work villainy. The grim spirit was named Grendel, infamous prowler on the wasteland, who held the moors, the fen and the fastness. For a long time the wretched creature dwelt in the land of the monster-race, since the Creator had condemned him. The eternal Lord avenged the murder on the race of Cain because he slew Abel. He had no joy in the feud; God banished him far away from mankind for that wickedness. From him all the evil brood were sprung, Etens and elves and wicked monsters, and giants that long time strove with God; He requited them for it!

[1] There was always danger of its being burnt down in a hostile attack.
[2] The Anglo-Saxon poet and singer.

II

THE HAVOC WROUGHT BY GRENDEL

When night came he went to seek out the high house and see how the Ring-Danes had settled down in it after their beer-drinking. He found there the band of athelings sleeping after the feast: they knew not sorrow, the misery of men. The creature of evil, grim and greedy, was soon ready and, fierce and furious, seized on their beds thirty thanes. Thence he went again towards home, exulting in the spoil, to seek his haunts with his fill of slaughter. Then at dawn, at break of day, was Grendel's strength in battle plain to men. After feasting was weeping; a great cry in the morning was raised. The noble prince, time-honored atheling, sat joyless; the mighty one suffered, bore deep sorrow for his thanes, when they beheld the footprint of the loathed one, the accursed spirit. Too fierce was that strife, too hateful and prolonged! It was not long before Grendel again, after one night, committed more murder—slaughter and sin. Nor did he shrink therefrom; he was too steadfast in guilt. Then was many a one found who elsewhere sought him a more

distant resting place, bed in bower,[1] when Grendel's hatred was revealed to him, was made known truly by clearest token. Who escaped from the fiend, held himself afterwards farther away and more safely.

So Grendel held sway and contended against right, one against all, until the best of houses stood idle. It was a long time. Twelve winters long the Lord of the Scyldings suffered affliction, every woe, the greatest sorrow. And so it became well known to the sons of men, sadly through songs, that Grendel strove a great while against Hrothgar, waged war, continual strife, violence and crime, many a half year. He wished no peace with any man of the Danish host, nor would remove their life's bale, compound for money. None even of the old men need hope for bright compensation at the destroyer's hands. The grim monster, the dark death-shadow, was relentless to young and old, lay in ambush and waited. All night long he held the misty moors. Men do not know whither Hell's demons go in their rounds.

So many crimes, mighty wrongs, the foe of mankind, the terrible solitary, oft did. Through the dark nights he dwelt in Heorot, the fair-fitted hall. He might not approach the gift-seat, precious before God, nor knew he God's love. It was a heavy trial, soreness of heart, to the friend of the Scyldings. Oft many a one strong in council sat and considered what was to be done,—what were best for brave men to do against the unthought of terror. At times they vowed sacrifices to idols in their heathen temples, entreated with words that the devil should give them help against this folk-affliction. Such was their custom, the hope of the heathen. In their heart they thought upon Hell. They knew not the Creator, the Judge of Deeds, knew not the Lord God, had not in truth learned to praise the Heavenly Keeper, the Prince of Glory. Woe is it for him that shall through sore affliction thrust his soul into the fire's embrace, never to hope for help or in any way to change his doom. Well is it for him who may after his death-day go to the Lord and ask for peace at the Father's bosom.

[1] Small building adjoining the hall.

III

BEOWULF JOURNEYS TO HROTHGAR

So always care surged within the breast of Healfdene's son. Nor might the prudent hero avert the misery: the strife was too great, too hateful and long, that had come upon the people, the grim persecution, greatest of night-terrors.

All this, the deeds of Grendel, a thane of Hygelac heard of far off in his country, a good man among the Geats, who was of mankind the strongest of might in his day and generation, noble and great. He ordered him a good wave-courser fitted out; said he would seek the war-king, the renowned prince, over the swan-road, since he had need of men. Wise men blamed him not for that journey, though he was dear to them. They urged the valiant one on, foretold success. The good man had chosen warriors of the Geat-folk, the bravest that he could find. One of fifteen, he started for the ship; the sea-crafty man [2] led them to the shore. Time went on. The ship was on the waves, boat under bluff. Ready men mounted the prow; the waters rolled, sea against sand. The warriors bore into the bosom of the craft bright trappings, dazzling armor. The men shoved off the tight-seamed ship, heroes on willing journey. Then, driven by the wind, the foamy-necked boat, likest to a bird, went over the waves, till about the same hour of the next day the curve-stemmed ship

[2] *i.e.*, Beowulf

had advanced so that the voyagers saw land, the sea-cliffs gleam, steep hills, broad headlands. Then was the seafarer at the voyage's end. Up sprang the Weder-folk [1] quickly on land, made fast the sea-wood—their byrnies rattled, weeds of war—thanked God that the voyage had been easy for them.

When from the cliff-wall the guard of the Scyldings, whose duty it was to keep watch on the bluffs, saw them bearing bright shields, ready armor, over the gangway, curiosity troubled him in his thoughts as to what men they were. He went then, Hrothgar's thane, riding on horse to the shore, brandished mightily a great spear in his hands, with words asked: "What are ye of those bearing weapons, armed in byrnies, that thus come bringing a high ship over the sea-way, hither over the waves? Lo, this long while I have been coast-guard, have held the sea-watch, that on the land of the Danes no foe with ship-forces might do injury. No shield-bearers have ventured to come here more openly, nor have you any word-of-leave from the wagers of battle, the consent of my kinsfolk. Never saw I upon earth taller earl, man of battle, than is one of you; that is no mere hall-thane adorned with arms, unless his look belie him—a matchless sight. Now I must know what folk ye belong to, ere ye go farther hence like spies in the land of the Danes. Now, ye seafarers from afar, hear my plain thought: soonest is best to make known whence you come."

IV

BEOWULF'S PARLEY WITH THE COAST-GUARD

To him the chief made answer; the leader of the company unlocked his word-hoard: "We are, by kin, of the Geat-folk, and hearth companions of Hygelac. My father was well known among nations, a noble leader, Ecgtheow by name. He lived many winters ere he passed hence from his home an old man. Every wise man remembers him well, widely through the world. We have come in friendly spirit seeking thy lord, Healfdene's son, the people's protector. Be thou good in counsel to us. We have a weighty message for the glorious king of the Danes; nor, as I think, shall there be anything secret about it. Thou knowest—if it is as in truth we heard tell—that among the Scyldings I know not what scather—mysterious worker of hate—in the dark nights shows in terrible wise unheard of rage, oppression, and slaughter. For this I may give Hrothgar counsel unselfishly, how he, wise and good, may overcome the fiend—if ever a change shall come to him again, relief from the press of evils—and his care-seethings may grow cool; else ever afterwards he shall suffer time of affliction, sore distress, whilst there stands on the high place the fairest of houses."

The guard spoke, a fearless officer, as he sat there on his horse: "Of each of these the alert warrior, if he has a clear mind, shall judge rightly,—words and deeds. I hear what you say, that this is a band friendly to the Lord of the Scyldings. Go forth bearing weapons and war-weeds; I shall show you the way. Also I shall command my men honorably to guard your ship against any foe, the fresh-pitched boat on the sand, until the curved-necked craft bears the beloved warrior back to Wedermark, and all such of the men of deeds as Fate grants that they endure safely the storm of battle."

Then they started to go. The boat remained still: the broad-bosomed ship rested on the rope, fast at anchor. Gold-studded boars gleamed on top of their

[1] Another name for Geats.

helmets,[1] shining and fire-hardened,—they held life in their protection for war-eager men. The warriors began to advance together until they could see the timbered hall, gorgeous and gold-gleaming. That was to earth-dwellers the most famous of halls under heaven, in which the ruler bode. Its light shone over many lands. To them the fierce one in battle pointed out the bright dwelling of heroes, that they might go straightway to it. Then that one of the warriors turned his horse and said: "It is time for me to go. The Almighty Father graciously hold you safe on your ventures. I will go back to the sea to keep watch against hostile bands."

V

BEOWULF GOES TO GREET HROTHGAR

The street was paved with stones; it showed the way to the company of men. War corselet shone, hard, hand-linked; the bright ring-mail rang in their war gear, when first in their grim trappings they came marching to the hall. Sea-weary they set their broad bucklers, their shields exceeding hard, against the wall of the dwelling place, and sank upon benches,—byrnies rang, the men's armor. They stood their spears, seamen's weapons, all together, with their gray ash-shafts up. That iron-clad throng was well equipped with weapons.

Then a proud warrior asked the brave ones about their race: "Whence bear ye gold-studded shields, gray corselets, and visored helmets, a heap of war-shafts? I am Hrothgar's messenger and servant. Nor have I seen so many men, strangers, more valiant. I ween that ye have sought Hrothgar for glory, out of greatness of heart, not through exile."

Then the proud leader of the Weders, famed for valor, answered him, next spoke words, stern beneath helmet: "We are Hygelac's table-companions; Beowulf is my name. I will tell the renowned prince thy lord, Healfdene's son, my errand, if it please him to grant us that we greet him, worthy as he is." Wulfgar spoke—he was lord of the Vandals; his character was known to many, his valor and wisdom: "I will ask the friend of the Dane-folk, lord of the Scyldings, as is thy wish,—inquire of the ring-giver, my illustrious prince, concerning thy mission, and straightway make known to thee the answer that in his goodness he thinks well to give me." Quickly he went to where Hrothgar sat, old and gray, with his company of earls. The warrior famed for valor went until he stood directly before the king of the Danes; he knew the custom of the court. Wulfgar spoke to his dear lord: "Here are journeyed, come from afar, over the sea's expanse, people of the Geats. The men call their leader Beowulf. They ask, my lord, that they may exchange words with thee. Do thou not deny them thy answer, gracious Hrothgar. In their arms they seem worthy of the esteem of earls. Strong is their chief, who has led hither the warriors.

VI

BEOWULF'S RECEPTION BY HROTHGAR

Hrothgar spoke, Lord of the Scyldings: "I knew him when he was a boy; his father was called Ecgtheow, to whom Hrethel of the Geats gave his only daughter into his household. Now has his son come hither in his valor, sought a loyal friend. Then, too, sea-travelers, who carried thither gift-treasures in friendship to the Geats, said that he, the battle-famed, had the might of thirty men in his handgrip. The blessed God in His mercy has sent him to us—to the West-Danes

[1] The helmet was surmounted by a heavy figure of a boar, that gave it additional strength against a downward blow.

—methinks against Grendel's terror. I shall tender gifts to this good man for his daring. Be thou quick, bid them come in together to see me; and in words say to them that they are welcome to the Dane-folk."

Wulfgar went towards the door of the hall and spoke these words from within: "My victory-lord, King of the Danes, bade me say that he knows your noble race and you, resolute warriors, are welcome hither over the sea-surge. Now you may go in your armor, under war-helms, to see Hrothgar. Let your shields and your battle-shafts await here the issue of your words."

The leader arose, many a warrior about him, a mighty band of thanes; some remained there, looked after the war-gear, as the hardy one bade them. Together they hastened—the man showed them the way—under Hrothgar's roof. The hero went, strong under his helmet, until he stood at the hearth.[1] Beowulf spoke—his byrnie shone on him, battle mesh linked by smith's skill: "Health to you, Hrothgar! I am Hygelac's kinsman and thane. Many a mighty venture I have undertaken in my youth. In my native land Grendel's doings became well known to me. Travelers over the sea say that this hall stands, this most fair dwelling, idle and useless to every man after the evening light is hidden under heaven's vault. Then my people, the best and wisest men, counseled me, King Hrothgar, that I seek thee, for they knew the strength of my might. They saw for themselves when I came from battle, blood-stained from the enemy, where I bound five, destroyed the giants' kin and on the waves slew the water-monsters by night—they courted trouble;—dire distress I endured, avenged the Weders' affliction, crushed the wrathful ones. And now I shall go against Grendel, against the monster, alone shall deal with the demon. But, Lord of the Scyldings, chief of the Danes, I will ask thee one boon, that thou wilt not deny me, O protector of warriors, good friend of the people, now that I have come thus far,—that alone with my company of earls, this hardy band, I may cleanse Heorot. I have also heard that the fiend in his recklessness takes no thought for weapons. I therefore scorn,—so may Hygelac, my liege lord, be gracious of mood to me,—to bear sword or broad buckler, the yellow shield, to battle, but with grasp I shall grapple with the enemy and contend for life, foe against foe. There shall he whom death takes trust in the judgment of the Lord. I think, if he may prevail, that without fear he will devour, as he oft has done, the Geat-folk in the battle hall, the flower of men. Never will you need to shroud my face; but he will have me stained with gore if death takes me. He will bear away a bloody corpse, think to feast on it; the lonely wanderer will devour me without pity and stain his moor-haunts with my blood. You no longer will need to care about my body. Send to Hygelac, if battle takes me, the best of war corselets, the finest of garments, that protects my breast; that was Hrethel's bequest, Weland's[2] work. Wyrd[3] goeth ever as she must!"

[1] *i.e.*, in the midst of the hall

VII

HROTHGAR'S WORDS TO BEOWULF

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' protector: "For deeds done and through kindness thou hast sought us, my friend Beowulf. Thy father fought the greatest of feuds: he was the slayer of Heatholaf among the Wylfings. After that the Weder's kin might not harbor him for fear of war. Thence over the rolling of waves he sought the South-Danefolk, the Honor-

[2] Teutonic god, corresponding to Vulcan.
[3] Fate

Scyldings, when first I ruled the Danish folk and in youth held wide domain and the treasure-city of men. Heregar then was dead; my elder brother was no longer living, Healfdene's son. He was a better man than I! Afterwards I settled the feud for money, sent over the water's back age-old treasures to the Wylfings. He swore oaths[1] to me. Sorrow in my soul it is for me to say to any man what shame Grendel has done to me in Heorot through his hatred, what dread attacks he has made. My hall-company is wasted away, my band of warriors. Fate has swept them off through Grendel's terror. God may easily keep the mad ravisher from his deeds. Full oft warriors drunken with beer have boasted over their ale-cups that they would bide in the beer-hall Grendel's attack with the terror of swords. Then in the morning, when day dawned, this mead-hall, the warriors' room, was smeared with blood—all the benches dripping with gore—the hall stained with the blood of strife. I possessed the fewer liegemen, a beloved band, for them that death took away. Sit down now together and reveal thy hope of victory to my men as thy mood moves thee.[2]"

Then was a bench cleared in the mead-hall for the Geat-folk all together. There the mighty ones went to sit, exulting in their strength. A thane fulfilled his office, who bore in his hand the fretted ale-cup, poured out the bright mead. At times the scop sang clear-toned in Heorot. There was joy for the heroes, no small band of Danes and Weders.

VIII

UNFERTH TAUNTS BEOWULF. THE HERO'S REPLY

Unferth spoke, Ecglaf's son, who sat at the feet of the Scyldings' lord; he loosed his secret grudge. The coming of Beowulf, the daring sea-farer, vexed him strongly, for he did not wish that under Heaven any other man should ever achieve greater glory in the world than he himself. "Art thou the Beowulf that contended with Breca, competed in swimming in the broad sea, when you two for daring braved the waves and for boastfulness ventured with your lives in deep water? Nor might any man, either friend or foe, dissuade you from the dangerous journey when you swam in the sea. There you enfolded the ocean stream in your arms, traversed the searoads, pressed back with your hands, and glided over the ocean. The deep was swollen with waves in the winter's flood. A seven-night you toiled in the water's power. He overcame you in swimming, had greater might. Then in the morning the flood bore him up among the Heathoreames. Thence, dear to his people, he sought his home, the land of the Brondings, the fair strong town where he had kinsmen, court, and riches. The son of Beanstan truly carried out all his boast with thee. Therefore I foresee a worse issue will come to thee,—though thou hast everywhere been brave in the storm of battle, in grim fight—if thou durst abide Grendel a nightlong time nearby."

Beowulf answered, Ecgtheow's son: "Well, my friend Unferth, drunken with beer thou hast said full much about Breca, hast spoken about his adventure. The truth I maintain,—that I had more strength in the water, endured more hardships on the waves than any other man. We agreed and boasted, boys that we were—we were both still in our youth —that out on the ocean we would venture with our lives, and so we carried out our boast. We had naked swords, hard in hand, when we swam in the sea; we thought to defend ourselves against

[1] of friendship
[2] A free rendering; the passage defies interpretation or emendation.

whales. He might not swim at all far from me in the ocean waves, faster in the sea, nor would I go from him. We were together on the deep the space of five nights, until the flood drove us apart—the seething waters, coldest of weathers, darkening night—and the grim north wind turned against us. Fierce were the waves. The temper of the whales was roused. There my body-mail, hard hand-locked, was a help to me against the enemy; the woven war-shirt, gold-adorned, lay on my breast. A dire foe drew me to the ocean bed, fast held me, grim of grip. But it was my fate that I should reach the monster with my sword, my battle-blade. Through my hand the storm of battle carried off the mighty sea-beast.

IX

BEOWULF CONTINUES HIS ACCOUNT OF THE SWIMMING MATCH WITH BRECA

"So the loathsome spoilers oft pressed me hard. I served them with the well-loved sword, as was fitting. By no means had they the joy of their fill, the grim destroyers, devouring me, sitting around the feast nigh the sea-bottom. But in the morning, wounded by swords they lay up on the beach, put to sleep by the battle-blades, so that never afterwards the fell creatures hindered farers on the high sea. Light came from the east, God's bright beacon, and the waters grew calm, so that I could see the bluffs, the windy walls. Fate oft protects an earl not yet doomed to die, when his courage is great! At any rate it happened that I slew with the sword nine sea-monsters. Never heard I of harder fight at night under heaven's vault, nor of a man harder pressed on the sea. Yet I escaped with life from the clutches of foes, though weary of my journey. Then the sea, the flood and the swelling waves, bore me with the stream to the land of the Finns. Never concerning thee have I heard tell of such battles, the terror of swords. Breca never yet—nor either of you—in battle did so bold a deed with gleaming swords—I will not boast much about it—though thou didst kill thy brothers, thy near kinsmen. For that thou shalt suffer punishment in Hell, though thy wit be strong. I tell thee truly, son of Ecglaf, that Grendel, the terrible monster, would never have done so many outrages to thy lord, harm to Heorot, if thy heart and mind were so fierce in battle as thou thyself dost claim. But he has found that he need not greatly fear the feud, the cruel turmoil of swords, of your people, the Victory-Scyldings. He takes forced tribute, shows mercy to none of the Danish folk, but has his pleasure, kills and sends hence, expects no fight from the Spear-Danes. But soon now I will offer him battle, strength and valor of the Geats. He who may shall go back proud to the mead, after the morning light, the bright-clad sun, shines from the south another day over the children of men!"

Then was the gray-haired and battle-famed giver of treasure joyful. The Lord of the Danes felt sure of help. The guardian of the folk was aware in Beowulf of a resolute will. There was laughter of heroes, the joyous clamor rang, words were fair. Wealtheow went forth, Hrothgar's queen, adorned with gold, mindful of courtesy,—greeted the warriors in the hall. Then the noble wife offered the cup first to the guardian of the East-Danes, bade him be joyful at the beer-drinking, for he was dear to his people. With a good will he partook of the banquet and hall-cup, the war-famed king. Then the lady of the

Helmings[1] went around to retainer and youth, all of them, passed the precious vessels, until the time came that she, the ring-decked queen, great of heart, bore the mead-cup to Beowulf. She greeted the prince of the Geats, and, wise of words, thanked God that the joy had come to her of expecting from any earl relief from their sufferings. He received the cup, the warrior fierce in battle, at the hand of Wealtheow, and then spoke, inspired by the coming battle. Beowulf said, Ecgtheow's son: "I resolved, when I set out on the water, sat down with my band of men in the ship, that I would of a surety work the will of your people, or die in battle fast in the fiend's grip. I shall do earl-like deeds of valor, or abide my last day in this mead-hall!" Full pleasing to the woman were his words, the mighty pledge of the Geat. In her gold adornments she went, the noble folk queen, to sit by her lord.

Then, as before, within the hall was strong word spoken, the company joyful, the noise of the valiant, until presently the son of Healfdene would seek his bed. He knew that an attack had been intended by the monster, against the high hall, from the time that they could see the light of the sun until over all, the shadowy night, shapes of darkness, came striding black under the heavens. All the band rose. One man greeted the other, Hrothgar Beowulf, and wished him well, gave him power over the wine-hall, and this word spoke: "Never before have I entrusted to any man, since I might lift hand and shield, the mighty hall of the Danes but to thee now. Have now and hold the fairest of houses. Keep in mind thy fame, show valor, be watchful against the evil one! There will be no lack of good things to thee, if thou pass safely through that mighty work."

[1] Wealtheow was of the Helming tribe.

X

THE WATCH FOR GRENDEL

Then Hrothgar, King of the Scyldings, went out of the hall with his company of warriors; the war-lord would seek Wealtheow, his queen, for bedfellow. The King of Glory had set a guard against Grendel, as men have heard; who did a special service for the Lord of the Danes, kept watch against the giant. Gladly indeed the prince of the Geats trusted in his bold might and God's grace. Then he took off his iron byrnie, the helmet from his head, gave his fair-fretted sword, best of blades, to a retainer, and bade him keep the war-gear. Before he mounted his bed the valiant one, Beowulf of the Geats, spoke brave words: "No less do I deem myself of might in war-works than Grendel thinks him. Therefore I will not kill him with the sword, deprive him of life, though I well may; he knows nothing of these helps with which to strike against me and shatter my shield, though he be strong in violent deeds. But to-night we two shall set sword aside, if he dare seek fight without weapon, and afterwards may the wise God, the holy Lord, grant glory on whichever hand seems meet to Him."

Then the warrior bold in battle laid him down. The cheek-pillow received the face of the earl, and about him many a brave seaman sank upon hall-bed. None of them thought that hence he should ever again seek his dear home, his people, or the free town where he was brought up. Rather they had heard how before this a violent death had taken away far too many of the Dane-folk in the wine-hall. But the Lord granted the fortunes of victory to the Weders, gave them solace and help, that through one man's strength, his own might, they all over-

came their enemy. The truth is well known, that mighty God has ever ruled over mankind.

In the dark night came striding the night-prowler. The warriors slept, those that were to guard the gabled hall, all except one. It was known to men that the demon scather might not cast them down to the shades—the Lord did not wish it then. But enraged, watching in anger for the wrathful one, Beowulf awaited the issue of the battle.

XI

THE FIGHT WITH GRENDEL

Then from the moor under cover of darkness came Grendel stealing; God's wrath he bore. The fell spoiler meant to ensnare one of human kind in the high hall. Under the clouds he advanced to where he knew most surely the wine-hall stood, the gilded hall of men, bright with gold. Nor was that the first time he had sought Hrothgar's home. Never in all his days, before or since, found he harder fortune, sterner hall-thanes! To the great house the slayer came stalking, bereft of joy. The door, braced by fire-hardened bands, soon gave way as he touched it with his hands. Intent on evil, he swung wide the mouth of the hall, for he was enraged. Quickly after that the fiend stepped onto the fair floor, advanced angry of mood. An evil light, most like a flame, shone from his eyes. He saw within a host of warriors, a band of kinsmen sleeping together, a troop of heroes. Then his heart leaped up. The dire fiend thought that before day came he would sever life from the body of each one, for he had hope of a full feast. Yet it was not to be his fate that he should devour more of mankind after that night. The mighty kinsman of Hygelac watched how the wicked scather would proceed with his sudden clutchings. Nor did the fiend mean to delay, but quickly he seized, the first time, a sleeping warrior, tore him unhindered, bit into the bones, drank the blood from his veins, swallowed great pieces. Soon he had consumed all of the lifeless one, even feet and hands. Forth he stepped nearer, took with his hand the strong-hearted warrior on his resting place; the fiend reached out towards him with his grasp. Quickly Beowulf received him with hostile intent, and raised himself on his arm. Soon the keeper of crimes found that never in the world, in any other man of earth's regions, had he met a mightier handgrip. As for his spirit, he waxed fearful of soul; yet none the sooner might he get him hence. His heart yearned to escape; he would flee to his hiding place, seek the turmoil of devils. His faring there was not such as in his former life-days he had met with. Then the worthy one, Hygelac's kinsman, bore in mind his evening speech, stood upright and laid fast hold on him. His fingers cracked. The giant fought to escape. The earl strode further. The notorious one thought to reach a more distant place and flee thence away to his fen-fastnesses. He realized the power of fingers in the enemy's grip. That was a grievous time when the worker of harm drew near to Heorot! The princely hall resounded; terror fell upon the earls, all the Danes, upon the dwellers in the town, upon each of the brave. Angry were both, grim keepers of the house. The hall re-echoed. It was a great wonder that the wine-hall withstood the fierce in battle, that it did not fall to earth, the fair building, except that it was fast bound within and without skilfully with iron bands. There started from the floor, as I have heard tell, many a mead-bench, adorned with gold, where the foes contended. Never before had

the wise men of the Scyldings thought that any man at any time or in any wise might shatter it (beautified and adorned with tusks), destroy it with cunning, unless the fire's embrace should swallow it in flame. The din mounted up, most unheard of. Horrible fear filled the North-Danes, to each one of those that from the wall heard cries,—heard God's enemy sing a song of terror, a chant of defeat, hell's captive bewailing his hurt. He held him fast who of men was strongest of might in that day of this life.

XII

BEOWULF'S VICTORY AND GRENDEL'S FLIGHT

The protector of earls would not for anything let one who came to bring death go from him alive; nor did he consider his life days good to any man. There full eagerly did Beowulf's earls brandish age-hallowed swords; they would protect the life of their lord, their renowned prince, if they could. They did not know when they engaged in fight, strong-hearted warriors, and thought to strike on all sides and seek Grendel's soul, that no war-blade nor any choicest of irons on earth would harm the fell spoiler; for he had cast his spell upon victory-weapons, on every kind of sword. His death must needs be miserable on that day of this life, and his spirit, parted from his body, must journey far in the power of the fiends. Then he who of old through his soul's affliction did many wrongs to the race of men—he strove with God—found out that his body would not avail him, for the valiant one, Hygelac's kinsman, had him by the hand. Each, living, was hateful to the other. The fell wretch suffered bodily hurt; full evident on his shoulder was a grievous wound. The sinews parted, joints cracked. To Beowulf was granted glory in battle. Grendel, sick unto death, must flee hence under the fen-slopes to seek his joyless haunt. Full well he knew that the end of his life was come, the number of his days.

After the bloody strife joy came to all the Danes. He who, wise and brave, had come from afar, had cleansed Hrothgar's hall, rescued it from affliction. He rejoiced in his night's work, his deeds of courage. The prince of the Geats had fulfilled his boast to the East-Danes, likewise mended all their sorrow and cares that they erst had endured and of necessity must have suffered,—no little hardship. That was a manifest token when the hero laid down a hand, arm and shoulder,—there all together was Grendel's clutch—under the vaulted roof.

XIII

THE REJOICING. THE SONG OF SIGEMUND AND HEREMOD

Then in the morning, as I have heard tell, was many a warrior around the gift-hall. Leaders of peoples from far and near journeyed through wide-reaching ways to see the marvel, the traces of the hateful one. Nor did his death bring regret to any of the men who viewed the footprints of the vanquished, and saw how weary of mood and overcome in the contest he bore the remains of his life on the way thence to the demons' pool, put to flight and doomed to die. There the surging water, the dreadful swirl of the waves, was all mingled with blood, boiled with hot gore, the blood of battle. Death-doomed he had dived; afterwards joyless he laid down his life, his heathen soul, in his fen retreat. There Hell received him.

Thence again from the mere on their joyful way went old companions and many a young man, high spirited, riding on mounts, warriors on white horses. There was Beowulf's fame talked of; often many a one said that north and south from sea to sea over the spacious earth none other under heaven's expanse, none among shield-bearers, was a better man, worthier of rule. Nor, indeed, did they blame at all their good lord, gracious Hrothgar, for he was a good king! At times the famed in battle let their horses gallop, their fallow steeds, known for their excellence, run a race where the roads seemed good to them. At times a thane of the king's, a proud man with a memory stored with songs, who bore in mind many an old tradition—one word found another fittingly bound[1]—this warrior in his turn began dexterously to relate Beowulf's adventure and artfully to recite a skilful story, to shape his words. He told everything that he had heard of Sigemund's deeds of valor, many an unfamiliar thing, of Waelsing's[2] fight, his long journeys of which the sons of men knew not at all, his feud and crimes, except Fitula, who was with him when he would say anything of such matters, uncle to nephew; for they were ever comrades in need at every battle.

"They had laid low with swords full many of the race of giants. To Sigemund there sprang up after his death-day no little renown since, fierce in fight, he killed the dragon, guardian of the hoard. Under the hoary rock the atheling's son performed the daring deed alone, nor was Fitula with him. However, it chanced that the sword went through the wondrous serpent so that it stuck in the wall, a noble iron. The dragon died in that slaying. The terrible warrior had brought it about by his valor that he might enjoy the ring-hoard at his own will. The son of Waels loaded a ship, bore in the bosom of the boat the bright treasures. The dragon was consumed in its own fire.

He was far and wide most famous of heroes throughout nations, protector of warriors by deeds of daring—therefore he prospered in days now past—after Heremod's valor, his strength and courage, grew less. Among the Jutes he was betrayed into the power of the enemy, was quickly put to death. Overwhelming sorrows oppressed him too long; he became to his people, to all the athelings, a great care. So, too, in former times, many a prudent man lamented the bold one's course, who trusted to him for boot of his wrongs, believed that a prince's son should prosper, should inherit the excellence of his father, guard the people, the treasure, and their sheltering city, the realm of heroes, the home of the Scyldings. Hygelac's kinsman[3] was in this respect more pleasing to his friends, to all the race of men. Evil possessed the other."

[1] *i.e.*, by alliteration
[2] *i.e.*, Sigemund's

At times in races they measured the yellow roads with their horses. Then was the morning light driven on and quickened. Many a resolute warrior went to the high hall to see the strange wonder. So, too, the King himself, famed for virtues, keeper of the treasure-hoard, walked in princely wise with a great company from his wife's bower; and beside him his queen with a train of women paced the path to the mead-hall.

XIV

HROTHGAR'S SPEECH AND BEOWULF'S REPLY

Hrothgar spoke—he had gone to the hall, stood on the steps, looked at the high gilded roof, and at Grendel's hand: "For this sight may thanks be speedily given to the Almighty! Many a hateful thing I have endured in my life, afflictions at the hands of Grendel. God may ever work miracle after miracle, the Lord of Glory. Not long ago I thought never to expect help in any woes, when the fairest of houses stood gory, stained with blood—a widespread woe to each of the counselors, who did not think that they could ever protect the people's stronghold from the hateful ones, from demons and evil spirits. Now has a

[3] Beowulf

warrior through the might of the Lord performed the deed which we all through our skill were not able to do. Lo, whoever among women brought forth such a son among the races of men, if she still lives, truly may she say that God has been gracious to her in her child-bearing. Now, Beowulf, best of warriors, I will love thee as a son in my heart. Keep thou well henceforth this new kinship. Nor shalt thou lack anything good in the world that I have in my power. Full oft I have bestowed reward for less, gift of honor to a lowlier man, to one weaker in combat. Thou hast alone done deeds for which thy fame will live for ever and ever. May the Almighty requite thee well as he has just done."

Beowulf spoke, Ecgtheow's son: "Full gladly did we perform that work of valor, fought the fight, daringly braved the might of the unknown foe. Rather would I that thou mightest have seen him, the fiend himself, killed in his native trappings! With hard clutch I thought to bind him quickly to his death-bed, that by my handgrip he should lie in the throes of death, unless his body escape. I might not prevent him from going—the Lord did not will it. I did not hold him fast enough, the deadly foe; the enemy was too powerful in flight. But now, to save his life he left his hand behind, both arm and shoulder. Yet no help did the wretched wight get thereby. No longer does the loathly spoiler live, weighed down with sins, but pain hath clutched him close in a relentless grip with baleful bonds. There, outlawed for his wickedness, he shall abide the great judgment,—how the resplendent Creator will impose doom upon him."

Then the man, the son of Ecglaf, was more quiet in his boast of battle work, since the athelings saw over the high roof as a result of the earl's prowess, the hand, the fingers of the fiend. In front, each of the hard nails was likest to steel, the hand-spurs of the heathen, the enemy's terrible claw. Every one said that none among weapons, no time-honored sword, would touch him, would cut off the blood-stained battle-hand of the monster.

XV

THE ENTERTAINMENT AND GIFTS IN HEOROT

Then was Heorot quickly ordered to be decorated with hands within. There were many of them, men and women, who made ready the wine-hall, the guest-place. Gold-embroidered hangings shone along the walls, many wondrous sights for all of the warriors who look upon such things. The bright building was badly shattered, though all braced with iron bands, and the hinges were wrenched apart. The roof alone survived wholly sound when the monster, an outcast for his crimes, turned in flight, despairing of life. Death is not easy for any man to escape—try who will—but he shall seek the place forced upon him by necessity, made ready for bearers of souls—earth dwellers, the children of men—where his body fast in its resting place shall sleep ever after.

Then was it the time and tide that Healfdene's son went to the hall; the king himself would partake of the banquet. Never heard I people in greater company fare better in their treasure giver. The famed warriors reclined upon the benches, rejoiced in the feast, roundly drained many a mead-cup. The kinsmen strong of heart, Hrothgar and Hrothulf,[1] were in the high hall. Heorot within was filled with friends. As yet the Scylding folk had wrought no treachery. Then the son of Healfdene gave to Beowulf a golden banner, the reward of victory, a

[1] Hrothgar's nephew.

fairly wrought standard, a helmet and a byrnie. Many saw a priceless treasure-sword borne before the warrior. Beowulf drank a beaker in the hall. No need had he to be ashamed of the presents before the warriors—nor have I heard of many men who gave four precious things adorned with gold to others on the ale-bench. Around the crest of the helmet, on the outside, a ridge bound with wires protected the headpiece, that the tempered product of files[1] might not harm him when the warrior bold in battle should go against his enemies. Then the protector of earls had eight horses, gold-bridled, led on the floor of the hall within the enclosure. On one of them rested a saddle cunningly fashioned, adorned with jewels. That was the battle-seat of the king when the son of Healfdene would engage in the play of swords. Never did the far-famed ruler's courage fail at the front when the slain were falling. And then to Beowulf the Lord of the Danes gave power over both,—horses and weapons. He bade him enjoy them well. Thus nobly the illustrious prince, the heroes' treasure keeper, rewarded the storms of battle, with horses and rich things, such as man never finds fault with if he will speak truly according to the right.

XVI

THE GIFTS TO BEOWULF'S MEN. THE SCOP'S SONG OF FINN

Then, in addition, to each of those that went on the sea journey with Beowulf the lord of earls gave treasures at their mead-bench, heirlooms, and ordered recompense with gold for that one whom Grendel had violently killed,—as he would have killed more of them, had not the wise God and the hero's valor prevented such a fate. The Creator ruled all the race of men as He yet doth. Therefore is understanding always best, counsel of mind. Much happiness and pain shall he abide who long enjoys the world in these days of strife!

There song and music were mingled together before Healfdene's leader in war;[2] the harp was touched, the tale oft recited, when Hrothgar's scop must produce hall entertainment among the mead-benches.

"When sudden attack was made on them by the followers of Finn, Hnaef Scylding, the hero of the Healf-Danes, was fated to fall in the Frisian slaughter.[3] No cause, indeed, had Hildeburh to praise the faith of the Jutes.[4] She was bereft of her guiltless loved ones in the shield-play, son and brother. They fell by destiny, wounded with spear. She was a sad woman! Not in vain did Hoc's daughter[5] bewail the decree of fate when, after morning came, she might see under heaven the murder of kinsmen where she erst held greatest of earth's joy. War took all but a few of Finn's men, so that he might in no wise strive with Hengest on the battlefield nor crush in battle those left to the prince's thane. But they offered him terms: that they would grant him another dwelling complete, hall and high-seat; that the Danes might share control with the sons of the Jutes; and that at the gift-givings the son[6] of Folcwalda each day would honor the Danes, would present Hengest's troops with rings, with treasures of beaten gold, even as freely as he would cheer his Frisian kinsmen in the beer-hall. Then they pledged firm compacts of peace on both sides. Finn affirmed by oaths his friendly zeal to govern honorably, with the advice of his wise men, the surviving remnant, on condition that no man should

[1] Kenning for "sword."

[2] Hrothgar

[3] The tale sung by the scop may here be outlined as follows: Finn, chief of the Frisians, has married a Danish princess Hildeburh. Years later when her brother Hnaef and some of his followers are visiting her they are treacherously attacked in the hall before daybreak by some of her husband's men. After defending themselves for five days, Hnaef and many of his men are slain. So, too, is a son of Hildeburh. After Hnaef's death Hengest commands the remaining Danes. A treaty is arranged with Finn and the slain on both sides are burnt together, with appropriate ceremonies. Hengest and his men stay in Friesland during the winter, but in the spring they are joined by fresh bands of Danes. Still meditating vengeance, they fall upon Finn, kill him, and carry Hildeburh back to her own land.

[4] Finn's people

[5] Hildeburh

[6] Finn

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break the treaty by word or deed, or through malice ever complain, though they followed the slayer of their ring-giver, lordless, since they needs must do so. If, on the other hand, any one of the Frisians by daring speech should call to mind the deadly hate, then the sword's edge should settle it.

The funeral fire was prepared and gold drawn from the hoard. The finest of the Here-Scylding warriors was ready on his pyre. At the burning were easily seen blood-stained sark,[1] golden swine, iron-hard boar,[2] and many an atheling dead from his wounds. Truly some fell on the battlefield! Then Hildeburh bade them commit to the flames her own son on Hnaef's pyre, to burn the bodies, and place him on the pyre beside his uncle. The woman grieved, mourned with dirges. The warrior was placed on the mound. The greatest of funeral fires rolled towards the clouds, roared before the burial mound. Heads melted, wound gashes burst, blood spurted, the body's death-bites. The flame, greediest of spirits, swallowed up all those of both folk whom battle carried off. Their glory was past.

XVII

THE END OF THE SCOP'S SONG. THE QUEEN'S SPEECH TO HROTHGAR

Then the warriors went to visit their homes, bereft of friends, to see Friesland, their dwellings and high town. Hengest still dwelt through the slaughter-stained winter with Finn, peaceably. He was mindful of his home, though he might [not] drive his ringed prow on the water. The sea boiled with storm, strove with the wind. Winter locked the waves in icy fetters, until another year came to men's dwellings—as still it does—the wondrously bright weather which always keeps the proper time. Then was winter departed; fair was earth's bosom. The exile yearned to go, the guest from the dwelling. He thought more of vengeance than of the sea voyage, if he might bring about an encounter, for he kept in mind inwardly the sons of the Jutes. So he did not refuse what the world appointed when Hunlafing placed in his arms a battle-brand, fairest of swords. Its edges were well known among the Jutes! Likewise, in his turn, dire death by sword fell upon Finn, the bold-hearted, in his home, when Guthlaf and Oslaf after a sea journey had bemoaned their sorrow, charged many wrongs. They might not keep their restless spirit in their breast. Then was the hall reddened with bodies of the enemy, Finn slain, king among his men, and his queen taken. The warriors of the Scyldings carried to the ship all the goods in his house,—jewels and precious gems such as they could find in the home of Finn, the king of the land. They carried on the sea voyage his queenly wife to the Danes, led her to her people."

The song was sung, the gleeman's tale. The sound of rejoicing again rose, the bench-noise grew louder. Cup-bearers gave wine from wondrous vessels. Then came forth Wealtheow, under her golden crown, to where the good pair sat, nephew and uncle; friendship was still between them, each true to other. There likewise Unferth, the King's spokesman, sat at the feet of the Lord of the Scyldings. Each of them trusted his spirit, that he had much courage, though he was not merciful to his kinsmen at the sword-play. Then the Queen of the Scyldings spoke: "Receive this cup, my dear lord, giver of treasures! Be thou joyful, gold-friend of men, and speak to the Geats with mild words, as one should do! Be gracious to the Geats, mindful of the gifts which near and far thou now hast. One told me that thou wouldst have this warrior for thy son. Heorot is cleansed, the bright ring-hall; indulge in many gifts while thou mayst, and to thy kindred leave folk and kingdom when thou must behold thy doom. I know my good Hrothulf will loyally guard the youths[3] if thou, friend of the Scyldings, leavest the world before he does; I think that he will repay with good our offspring if he has in mind all the kindness we two did in the past for his joy and honor when he was a child." Then she turned to the bench where her sons were, Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the children of heroes, young men together. There, too, the good Beowulf the Geat sat by the two brothers.

[1] shirt of mail
[2] *i.e.*, on the helmets

[3] Hrothulf is Hrothgar's nephew, with whom he later quarrels. The youths are his younger cousins, sons of Hrothgar and Wealtheow.

XVIII

THE QUEEN'S GIFTS TO BEOWULF. THE WARRIORS PREPARE FOR REST

To him was the cup borne and kindness in words offered; likewise twisted gold graciously bestowed, two armbands, corselet and rings, the greatest of collars that ever I knew of on earth. Of none finer under heaven heard I, treasure-hoard of heroes, since Hama carried off to the bright town the Brosings' necklace, jewel and setting,—he fled Eormenric's treachery, chose eternal counsel. Hygelac the Geat had the ring,[1] Swerting's nephew, the last time when he defended the treasure beneath his banner, guarded the battle-spoil; Fate carried him off when out of pride he sought trouble, battle with the Frisians. The mighty prince carried the richly wrought things, the precious stones, over the sea; he died under shield. The body of the king fell then into the hands of the Franks, his breast-weeds and the ring along with them. Less worthy warriors plundered the slain after the slaughter. The Geat-folk possessed the field of dead.[2]

The hall received the din. Wealtheow spoke; before the company she said: "With fair fortune enjoy this circlet, beloved Beowulf, O youth, and make use of this corselet, folk treasures both, and prosper well. Prove thyself by thy might, and be to these boys kind in counsel. I will remember thee with gifts. Thou hast accomplished that for which far and near men shall honor thee for ever more, even as widely as the sea encircles the windy cliffs. While thou livest, be prosperous! Heartily I wish thee treasures. Be thou to my son gentle in deeds, guarding his happiness. Here each earl is true to the other, mild of mood, loyal to his liege lord. The thanes are united, the people ready, the retainers who have here drunk. Do thou as I entreat!" She went then to her seat. There was choicest of feasts; the men drank wine. Fate they knew not, grim Destiny, as it befell many earls, when evening came and Hrothgar went to his dwelling, the noble prince to his rest. Countless earls kept watch in the hall as they often had done before. Bench space they cleared; it was overspread with beds and pillows. Some of the beer-drinkers, ready for death and doomed to die, bowed themselves to their hall couches. They set their shields at their heads, the bright bucklers. There on a bench over the atheling was visible the helmet towering in battle, the ringed byrnie, mighty spear. It was their custom always to be ready for war, both at home and in the army; and in either case, even at such times as need befell their liege lord, the people were prepared.

[1] The poet tells of the necklace's subsequent history. Beowulf gave it to his lord, Hygelac.

[2] They covered the ground.

XIX

THE COMING OF GRENDEL'S DAM

Then they fell asleep. One sorely paid for his evening rest,—as full often happened when Grendel kept the golden hall, wrought evil until his end came, death after sins. It became evident, widely known among men, that as yet an avenger survived the loathed one, a long time[3] after the battle-sorrow. Grendel's mother, a she-monster, brooded over her misery—she who must dwell in the dread water, cold streams, since Cain became the slayer of his only brother, kin by the same father. Outlawed and marked for murder, he went, fleeing man's joys, dwelt in waste places. Thence awoke many a fated spirit: Grendel was one of them, the hateful outcast, who

[3] It was only twenty-four hours.

found at Heorot a watching man biding the fight. There the wretched one laid hold of him; but he remembered the strength of his might, the generous gift that God had given him, and trusted himself to the Lord for help, for solace and support. Therefore he overcame the fiend, laid low the spirit from Hell. Then wretchedly Grendel departed, mankind's foe, cut off from joy, to see the house of death. And his mother, greedy and gloomy, even then would go on a sorrowful journey to avenge the death of her son.

She came to Heorot, where the Ring-Danes slept all around the hall. Soon a reverse befell the earls when Grendel's mother got within. The terror was less, even as much as is the strength of maidens, the war fierceness of women compared with armed men, when the fretted sword, forged with the hammer, the blood-stained blade, mighty of edge, cleaves the opposing boar on top of the helmet. There in the hall was hard edge drawn, the sword from above the seats, and many a shield was raised firm in hand. One minded not helmet or broad byrnie when the horror seized him. She was in haste, would hence away to save her life, when she was found out. Quickly she had laid firm hold on one of the athelings when she started for the fen. He was a companion to Hrothgar, his dearest of warriors from sea to sea, a mighty shield warrior, whom she killed in his rest, a glorious man. Beowulf was not there; for after the treasure-giving another dwelling had been assigned to the illustrious Geat. An outcry arose in Heorot. She took the much talked-of hand in all its gore. Sorrow was renewed in the dwellings. It was not a good exchange that on both sides they should make payment with their friends' lives!

Then was the wise king, the hoary warrior, in troubled mood when he knew his best thane to be lifeless, his dearest friend dead. Quickly was Beowulf, the victorious hero, fetched to the bower. At daybreak the noble warrior, the earl with his companions, went together where the wise king waited for the sad news, wondering whether the Almighty would ever amend his state. Across the floor strode the war-famous man with his company—the hall boards resounded—that he might greet the wise lord of the Danes. He asked if the night had been agreeable to his desires.

XX

HROTHGAR'S SPEECH TO BEOWULF

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' ward: "Ask not after happiness! Sorrow is come anew to the Danefolk. Dead is Æschere, Yrmenlaf's elder brother. He was my confidant and my counselor, shoulder companion when we guarded our heads in battle, when war-bands clashed and smote the boars.[1] Such should an earl be, time-proven atheling, as was Æschere! A wandering death-demon was his slayer in Heorot. I know not whither the vile wretch has returned, glorying in carrion, exulting in her feast. She avenged the feud in which last night you killed Grendel in violent fashion with hard grasp; for too long he wasted and destroyed my people. He fell in the conflict, forfeiting his life, and now another came, a mighty ravager who would avenge her son, and has carried far the feud, as it may seem to many a thane who weeps in his heart for his lord, for his soul's hard bale. Now the hand lies low that availed you of every wish.

"I have heard dwellers in the land, my people, hall-counselors, say that they saw two such great stalkers of the waste-lands holding the moors, alien spirits.

[1] *i.e.*, on helmets

One of them was, as they might know most surely, the likeness of a woman; the other wretched one trod the exile's path in man's form, except that he was larger than any other man. The people in former days named him Grendel. They knew no father, nor whether before them any evil spirit had in the past been born. They dwell in a secret place, the haunts of wolves, on windy bluffs, the fearful fen-path where the mountain stream pours down under the darkness of the cliffs, a flood under the earth. It is not far hence, measured in miles, that the mere[1] stands. Over it hang frost covered groves; a wood firmly rooted overshadows the water. There every night may be seen a fearful wonder, fire on the water. No one so wise lives among the children of men that knows the bottom. Though the stag, the hart strong of horns, having fled from afar and hard pressed by the dogs, may seek this wood, sooner will he give up his life and soul on the bank, ere he will hide his head in it. The place is not good! Thence the surging waves mount up, dark toward the clouds, when the wind stirs up grievous storms, until the sky becomes gloomy and the heavens weep. Now does help depend upon thee alone. Thou dost not yet know the abode, the fearful place where thou mayest find this creature of sin. Seek if thou dare! I will reward thee with riches for this fight, with time-hallowed treasures as I did before,—with twisted gold, if thou comest away alive."

XXI

BEOWULF'S REPLY. THE JOURNEY TO GRENDEL'S MERE

Beowulf spoke, Ecgtheow's son: "Sorrow not, man of wisdom. Better is it for every man that he avenge his friend than that he mourn greatly. Each of us must abide the end of this world's life; let him who may work mighty deeds ere he die, for afterwards when he lies lifeless that is best for the warrior. Arise, ruler of the realm, let us go quickly and see the track of Grendel's kinswoman. I promise thee this: she shall not escape under cover, nor in the bosom of the earth, nor in mountain grove, nor on the bed of the ocean,—go where she will! This day have thou patience in all thy woes, as I expect of thee." Then the aged man leaped up, thanked God, the mighty Prince, for what the warrior had said.

Then a horse was bridled for Hrothgar, a mount with braided mane. The wise king rode with stately bearing; a band of shield-bearers walked on foot. The foot-prints were widely visible, going along the forest tracks, as onwards she had gone over the murky moor. She carried away one bereft of his soul, the best of thanes, of those that with Hrothgar watched over the home. The athelings' son went then over steep rocky slopes, narrow paths, lonely trails, high bluffs, past many a demon's shelter. Foremost he went with a few wise ones to explore the land, until suddenly he found mountain trees leaning over the rime-covered rock, a joyless wood. Water stood below, blood-stained and turbid. It was a grief hard to endure for all the Danes, to the Scylding folk, to many a thane, sorrow to each earl, when they came upon Æschere's head on the cliff above the water. The flood seethed with blood—the people saw it—with hot gore.

The horn at times sang a rousing war-song. The band all sat down. Along the water they saw many of the serpent kind, strange sea-dragons making trial of the waves, and water-monsters lying on the headlands, serpents and wild beasts that often in the morning perform a perilous

[1] lake or pool

journey on the lake. They rushed away, fierce and enraged. They heard the noise, the war-horn sounding. The Geat deprived one of life with his bow, cut him off from his strife with the waves, when the hard war-shaft stopped in his heart. He was the slower in swimming when death overtook him. Soon he was hard beset on the waves with barbed boar-spears, attacked with violence, and drawn on to the cliff, a wonderful water-wight. The warriors looked long at the strange and horrible creature.

Beowulf clad himself in his armor; not at all did he mourn for life. His battle byrnie, woven by hands, large and cunningly adorned, must try the deep, which well could shield his body that the war-clutch might not injure his breast, nor the foe's treacherous grasp his life. And the shining helmet, rich with ornament, protected his head—it must disturb the bed of the mere, seek the commotion of waters. Encircled with bands, it was wonderfully made, as the armorer wrought it in bygone days, and was surmounted by figures of boars, so that afterwards no sword or battle-brand could bite into it. Nor indeed was that the least of powerful helps which Hrothgar's spokesman lent him in his need: Hrunting was the hilted sword's name. It was one of the foremost of family treasures. The edge was iron, etched by poison twigs, and hardened by the blood of battle. Never did it fail in the fight for any of the men that gripped it with hands, who durst travel the perilous ways of hostile battle-grounds. That was not the first time it had been called upon to perform work of valor. Truly Ecglaf's son, mighty of strength, when he lent the weapon to a better sword-warrior, did not hold in mind what he had formerly spoken, drunk with wine. He dared not himself venture his life under the strife of waves, perform deeds of valor. Thereby he missed glory and fame for courage. Not so was it with the other when he had girt him for battle.

XXII

BEOWULF'S FIGHT WITH GRENDEL'S MOTHER

Beowulf spoke, son of Ecgtheow: "Think now, famed son of Healfdene, wise prince, gold-friend of men, now that I am ready for the venture, what we two formerly spoke, if I in thy need should lose my life,—that thou wouldst be always in the place of a father to me when I had gone hence. Be thou a guardian to my fellow thanes, my close companions, if battle takes me. Likewise the treasure that thou gavest me, beloved Hrothgar, send thou to Hygelac. Then may the Lord of the Geats understand from the gold, Hrethel's son see when he looks on those riches, that I found a prince good in manly virtues, a giver of rings whom I enjoyed whilst I might. And let Unferth, the far-famed warrior, have the hard-of-edge, the old inheritance, this wonderful sword. I shall do valor with Hrunting or death shall take me!"

After these words the prince of the Weder-Geats quickly hastened away. No answer would he wait for; the surge of waters received the warrior. It was a good part of a day before he could see the bottom. Soon she who had held the region of waters a hundred half-years, ravenous, grim, and greedy, perceived that a man was venturing from above into the domain of monsters. Then she clutched at him, seized the warrior with terrible grasp. None the sooner did she harm the sound body within: the ringed armor outside protected him so that she could not penetrate the war-shirt, the linked corselet, with her loathsome fingers. Then the sea-wolf, when she came to the

bottom, bore the lord of rings to her dwelling, so that he could not wield weapons. He was angry at the demons, for many a strange monster harassed him in the water, many a sea-beast tried to pierce his armor with his tusks; the wretched creatures pursued him. Then the earl saw that he was in some enemy hall where no water at all harmed him, nor on account of the roofed chamber could the water's sudden attack touch him. The light of a fire he saw, a brilliant gleam shining brightly.

The hero saw the accursed monster, the mighty mere-wife. He drove with his battle-blade a powerful blow—his hand did not withhold the stroke—that on her head the sword sang a fierce war-song. Then the stranger found that the brand would not bite or harm her life; the sword failed the warrior in his need. It had erst endured many a battle, often had cut through helmet, war-garment of the doomed. That was the first time for the precious treasure that its glory failed.

Still the stout-hearted kinsman of Hygelac was in no wise slow in courage, being mindful of his fame. The angry warrior threw away the ring-marked sword, adorned with artful works, so that it lay on the ground, hard and steel-edged. He trusted in his strength, in his mighty hand-grip. So must one do when he thinks to gain lasting praise, nor cares aught for his life. The Lord of the War-Geats seized then Grendel's mother by the shoulder—he did not shrink from her wrath. Then the fierce war thane dragged his life-enemy—for he was angry—until she sank to the floor. Quickly in return she paid him back with grim clutches and grappled with him. Weary of heart the warrior, strongest of fighters on foot, stumbled, so that he fell. Then the hall-visitor sat upon him and drew her knife, broad and brown-edged. She would avenge her son, her only offspring. On his shoulder lay the woven breast-net: that saved his life, barred entrance against point and edge. Then would the son of Ecgtheow have perished under the broad earth, the warrior of the Geats, had not his battle byrnie, the hard war-net, done him service,—and holy God, Heaven's Ruler, easily decided it rightly when the warrior again stood up.

XXIII

BEOWULF KILLS GRENDEL'S DAM AND RETURNS TO HEOROT

Then he saw among some war-gear a victory-favored sword, a brand descended from giants, hard of edge, the glory of warriors. That was choicest of weapons except that it was greater than any other man could bear in battle, good and fully wrought, the work of giants. Then the Lord of the Scyldings seized the hilt, grim and fierce, drew the ring-sword, despairing of life, angrily struck so that sorely it gripped her by the neck, broke bone-rings. The blade went clear through her death-doomed body. She sank upon the ground. The sword was bloody. The hero rejoiced in his work.

A light gleamed, brightness stood within, even as heaven's candle shines clearly from the sky. He looked about the chamber. Hygelac's thane turned towards the wall, raised the weapon firmly by the hilt, angry and determined—the sword was not useless to the warrior. He would quickly repay Grendel for the many raids he had made upon the West-Danes,—much oftener than on that one occasion when he slew Hrothgar's hearth-companions while they slept, devoured fifteen sleeping men of the Dane-folk and carried off as many others as hateful booty. He had paid him his dues, the furious warrior, for he saw Gren-

del, war-weary, lying lifeless on his resting place, as the battle erst had wounded him at Heorot. The body sprang far when after death it suffered a blow, a hard sword stroke, which cut off its head.

Soon the wise men who looked on the water with Hrothgar saw that the surging waves were all stirred up, the sea was stained with blood. The old men, gray-haired, spoke together about the worthy one, said of the atheling that they thought he would never come triumphant to seek their glorious prince. Many agreed about it—that the sea-wolf had destroyed him. Then came noon of that day. The valiant Scyldings left the bluff; the gold-friend of men went back home. The visitors [1] sat sick at heart and stared at the mere. They hoped but never expected that they would see their beloved lord himself.

Then from the effects of the war-drops, the blood of battle, the sword began to shrink, the war-blade commenced to waste away. It was a marvelous thing that it all melted away like ice when the Father who has power over season and time, loosens the frost's fetters, unwinds the water-ropes. That is the true God!

The Lord of the Weder-Geats did not take from within the dwelling more things of price (though he saw many there), except the head, and the hilt with it, set with jewels. The blade had already melted, the fair-marked sword had burnt up: so hot was the blood, so poisonous the strange spirit who died there. Soon was he swimming who had survived in the conflict, the battle-terror of foes; he plunged up through the water. The surging waves were all cleansed, the vast region where the demon gave up her life days and this fleeting world.

Then came the stout-hearted lord of the sea-farers swimming to land; he rejoiced in his sea-booty, the mighty burden of what he had with him. Towards him then went the splendid band of thanes, thanked God, rejoiced in their prince, for that they might see him safe and sound. Speedily then were helmet and byrnie loosened from the mighty warrior. The mere grew calm, water under heaven, stained with the blood of slaughter. Rejoicing in heart, they went forth from there, walking, measured the land-path, the well-known road. Brave as kings, the men bore the head from the sea-cliff, with difficulty for each of them, the valiant ones; four were needed laboriously to bear Grendel's head on the slaughter-pole to the gold-hall—until presently there came walking to the hall fourteen Geats, bold and warlike. Their lord with his men, brave in the throng, trod the clearing before the mead-hall. Then the chief of the thanes came walking in, the man daring in deeds, exalted in fame, the warrior brave in battle, to greet Hrothgar. Now Grendel's head, terrible to the earls and to the queen who was with them, was carried by the hair into the hall where the men were drinking—a wonderful sight! The warriors looked on in amazement.

XXIV-XXV

BEOWULF'S ACCOUNT OF THE FIGHT. THE FEASTING. PREPARATIONS TO RETURN HOME

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow: "Lo, son of Healfdene, Lord of the Scyldings, we have gladly brought as a token of glory this sea-booty which thou here lookest upon. Not easily did I escape with life from the strife under water, with difficulty undertook the work. The fight were almost ended, if God had not shielded me. Nor could I do aught with Hrunting in the battle, though the weapon

[1] Beowulf's companions.

is of worth. But the Ruler of Men granted me that I should see hanging beautiful on the wall a mighty sword of old—full oft He guides the friendless—and that I should draw the weapon. I slew in the fight the keepers of the house, when chance offered. Then that battle-brand, the etched sword, burnt up when the blood sprang, hottest of battle-gore; I carried off the hilt thence from the fiends. I took vengeance for the outrages, the slaughter of the Danes, as it was fitting. Therefore I promise thee that thou mayst sleep in Heorot free from sorrow with thy band of warriors and every thane of thy people, tried warrior and youth, for on that score, Lord of the Scyldings, thou needst never fear life-bale for thy earls, as thou didst before." Then was the golden hilt given to the aged warrior, the white-haired battle-lord, into his hand, giants' work of old. After the demons' death, it came into the possession of the Lord of the Danes, this work of wonder-smiths. When the fierce-hearted wight went from this world, God's adversary, steeped in murder, and his mother too, it passed into the keeping of earthly kings, to the best from sea to sea of those that in Scedenig [1] dispensed treasure.

Hrothgar spoke—he gazed on the hilt, the age-old inheritance, on which was written the beginning of the ancient strife when the flood slew the race of giants, the flowing sea; they suffered sorely. That folk was alien to the Eternal Lord; the Ruler gave them their final dues through the water's surge. Likewise in rune letters, on the handle of bright gold was plainly marked, set down and said, for whom that sword, best of irons, was first wrought, twisted hilt and dragon-adorned. Then the wise one spoke, the son of Healfdene—all became silent: "Lo, this may he say who works truth and right among his people, a king old in years and remembering all far back, that this earl was born of nobler stock! Thy fame is lifted up throughout the distant stretches, Beowulf, my friend—over every nation. Thou holdest it all steadfastly, strength with prudence of mind. I shall carry out my friendship as we spoke a short time ago. Thou shalt be a lasting consolation to thy people, a help to men. Not so was Heremod to the sons of Ecgwela, the Ar-Scyldings; he did not grow to be a source of pleasure, but of slaughter and destruction to the Danish folk. In a rage he killed his table companions, his bosom comrades, until he went alone, a notorious prince, from the joys of men. Though mighty God raised him to the pleasures of power, advanced him in might over all men, nevertheless a blood-thirsty spirit grew in his heart. No rings did he give to the Danes for glory. Joyless he lived to endure the work of strife, a lasting woe to his people. Take thou a lesson from this. Grow wise in the virtues of men. As one old in winters I utter to thee this speech.

"It is a wonder to say how mighty God through his vast spirit distributes to mankind wisdom, estate, and rank; He has power over all things. At times he lets the thought of a man of noble birth turn to worldly delights, allows him to have joy of earth, to keep the stronghold of men, and commits to him as ruler regions of the world, wide domain, so that he himself in his unwisdom cannot imagine the end of it all. He lives in prosperity; no whit does sickness or age hinder him, nor sorrow cast a shadow over his spirit, nor does enmity anywhere break out into war; but for him all the world goes according to his desire. He knows no worse, until great pride waxes and grows within him while the guard [2]

[1] The name of the southern part of the Scandinavian peninsula, here applied to the lands of the Danes.

[2] His conscience.

sleeps, the soul's keeper. Too sound is that sleep, bound by cares. The slayer is very near, who shoots wickedly with his bow. Then under helmet is he struck in his heart by the bitter arrow—he cannot hide—by the sly mysterious biddings of the Accursed Fiend. He thinks that which he long held is too little, covets with angry mood, gives proudly no golden rings, and forgets and neglects the life to come because God, the Prince of Glory, erst gave him abundance of honors. But in the end it happens that the fleeting body droops and falls, doomed to die. Another takes his place, who recklessly scatters treasures, the earl's former hoardings, and knows no fear. Guard thee, beloved Beowulf, best of men, against evil, and choose the better,—eternal blessings. Beware of pride, O glorious warrior! Now for a little while the power of thy might lasts. But soon it will be that sickness or the sword will deprive thee of thy strength, or fire's grasp, or flood's surge, or sword's grip, or spear's flight, or dire old age, or else the eye's brightness will fail and grow dim. Presently, thou warrior, it will happen that death will overcome thee.

"So I have ruled the Ring-Danes a hundred half-years under heaven, and protected them with spears and swords in war against many nations throughout this earth until I reckoned no one a foe under heaven's expanse. Lo, a change came to me in my native land, grief after joy, when Grendel, that old adversary, became my invader; always I endured the persecution, sore grief of soul. Therefore I thank God, Eternal Lord, that I have continued alive, that I may look with eyes on this blood-stained head after the ancient strife! Go now to your seat, distinguished in battle, and enjoy the pleasure of the feast. A wealth of mutual treasures shall be ours in the morning."

The Geat was glad, went soon to seek his seat as the wise king bade. Then again as before was a feast fairly prepared, a second time, for the war-famed sitting in the hall. Night's cover grew dark over the warriors. All the company arose; the aged Scylding, gray-haired, would seek his bed. The Geat wished exceedingly to rest himself. Soon a hall-thane, who for courtesy looked after all such needs of a man as in those days warriors might have, showed him forth, weary from his venture, him who had come a long distance.

Then the great-hearted one rested him. The hall towered overhead, vaulted and gold-adorned. The guests within slept until the black raven, blithe-hearted, announced the joy of heaven.[1] Then the glorious light came hastening over the shadows. The warriors made haste: the athelings were eager to go again to their people. The valiant visitor would seek his ship and go far thence.

Then the mighty one bade the son of Ecglaf to carry Hrunting, bade him take his sword, precious blade. He spoke thanks to him for the loan, said that he counted the war-friend good, strong in battle; in no wise he blamed the sword's edge. He was a great-hearted warrior. And when, eager for the journey, the heroes were ready in their armor the atheling dear to the Danes went to the high place where the other was,—the hero brave in battle greeted Hrothgar.

XXVI

DEPARTURE OF BEOWULF AND THE GEATS

Beowulf spoke, son of Ecgtheow: "Now we seafarers, come from afar, wish to say that we are eager to see Hygelac. We have here been graciously entertained; thou hast treated us well. If now through

[1] Kenning for "sun."

any kind of war-deeds on earth I can earn more completely thy love than I have yet done, O prince of men, I am straightway ready. If I hear over the sea's expanse that neighboring peoples oppress thee greatly, as enemies in the past have done, I will bring thee thousands of thanes, warriors for help. I know, as for Hygelac, Lord of the Geats, though he be young for the people's ruler, that he will further me by word and work that I may rightly honor thee and bear spear-shaft for thy help, the support of might, whenever thou hast need for men. If, moreover, Hrethric, the king's son, purposes to go to the court of the Geats, he shall find many friends there. Far countries, when visited, are better for him who is strong himself."

Hrothgar spoke, in answer to him: "The wise God sent those words into thy mind. Never heard I a man in such early life speak more wisely. Thou art strong of might and old in thought, sound in speech! I deem it likely, if it comes to pass that the spear, grim battle, sickness, or the sword takes away Hrethel's son,—thy lord, the people's protector,—and thou hast thy life, that the Sea-Geats will have no better man to choose for king, for treasure-warden of heroes, if thou wilt rule the realm of thy kinsmen. Thy spirit pleases me more and more, good Beowulf. Thou hast brought it about that mutual peace shall be between the nations, the Geats-folk and the Spear-Danes; that strife shall cease, the enmities that in the past they engaged in; that whilst I rule this wide realm treasure shall be in common and many a one shall greet the other fairly over the gannet's bath.[1] The ring-prowed ship shall bring over the sea gifts and love-tokens. I know my people are firm in their resolve to both friend and foe, blameless in every respect according to the old fashion."

[1] across the sea

Then still the protector of earls, Healfdene's son, gave him twelve treasures, bade him with the gifts seek his own people in safety, and to come quickly again. The good king kissed the atheling —the Lord of the Scyldings kissed the best of thanes—and clasped him around the neck. Tears fell on his white beard. Old and wise, he reckoned with both chances, but with one of them more especially, that they might [not] see each other again, the high-hearted together. The man was so dear to him that he could not prevent the heavings of his breast; but fast locked in his bosom by his heart strings, a secret longing for the beloved warrior burned in his blood. Then Beowulf, a hero splendid with gold, strode over the green earth, proud of his treasure. The ship, riding at anchor, awaited its master. On the journey the gift of Hrothgar was often praised. That was a king in all things blameless, until age which has often harmed many a man took him off from the enjoyment of his might.

XXVII

THE RETURN OF THE GEATS TO THEIR OWN LAND

Many a hardy youth came then to the ocean; ring-nets[2] they bore, their coats of linked mail. The land-guard perceived the return of the earls, as he did before. With no words of insult from the top of the cliff did he greet the guests, but rode towards them, said that the brightly armed warriors went to their ship a welcome band to the Wederfolk. There on the sand was the curved bark, the ringed prow laden with war-weeds, horses, and treasures; the mast towered over Hrothgar's treasure-hoard. To the ship-guard Beowulf gave a sword bound with gold,

[2] coats of mail

so that afterwards on the mead-bench he was the worthier for the prize, a time-hallowed weapon. The boat went forward, stirring the deep water, left the land of the Danes. To the mast was a sea-garment, a sail fastened by a rope. The sea-wood creaked. The wind over the waves did not drive the ship from its course. The sea-traveler went, floated foamy-necked forth over the waves, the bound prow over the ocean streams, until they might see the cliffs of the Geats, the well-known bluffs. Driven by the wind the keel pressed on, stood upon land. The guard of the harbor was quickly at the water, ready; for a long time he had gazed far at sea, longing for the dear men. He fastened the broad-bosomed ship firmly to the sand with anchor-ropes, lest the force of the waves might drive it away, the winsome wood. Then Beowulf bade them carry up the athelings' treasure, their trappings and plated gold. He had not far thence to seek the giver of rich gifts, Hygelac, son of Hrethel, where he dwelt at home with his companions near the sea-wall.

Excellent was the building, valiant the king, high the hall, Hygd very young, wise and accomplished, though few winters had Haereth's daughter lived in the walled town. Nevertheless she was not ungenerous, nor too sparing of gifts of treasure to the Geatsfolk. Good queen of the people, she had not Thrith's pride, nor her terrible wickedness.

Not one of the dear retainers save her own great lord durst venture to look at her [Thrith] openly with his eyes; but [if he did,] considered the fatal hand-twisted rope to have been prepared for him. Soon after being seized he was forthwith marked for the sword, that with its dazzling blade it might make clear and manifest his death. Nor is such a custom queenly for a woman to practise, even though she be beautiful, that a peacemaker should exact the life of a dear man for a pretended injury. Albeit, the son of Hemming stopped that. Some over their ale said, too, that she did fewer harms to the people, fewer acts of violence, when once she had been given, gold-adorned, noted for excellence, to the young warrior, after she had sought at her father's behest, by a journey over the fallow flood, the hall of Offa. There living afterwards, famed for goodness, she enjoyed greatly her life on the throne, cherished high love for the lord of warriors, as I have heard, the best of all mankind, of the race of men from sea to sea. For Offa was, in gifts and battles, a brave man, widely renowned, and ruled with prudence his native land. From him sprang Eomer for help to heroes, Hemming's kinsman, grandson of Garmund, strong in battle.

XXVIII

BEOWULF'S RECEPTION BY HYGELAC AND THE ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPLOIT, WITH A DIGRESSION ON HROTHGAR'S DAUGHTER

Then the valiant one went along the sand with his company, himself treading the wide shores. The earth's candle shone, the sun hastening from the south. They journeyed on, went quickly to where they heard the protector of men, Ongentheow's slayer, the young war-king good, was distributing rings within the town. To Hygelac was Beowulf's journey quickly made known, that there to his homestead the shelter of warriors, of shield companions, was coming alive, sound from the battle-play, walking to the court. Quickly was the hall within cleared for the warriors, as the king bade.

With the king himself sat he who had come safely from the conflict, kinsman with kinsman, after he had greeted his lord in friendly speech, with earnest words. Around the hall Hareth's daughter passed with the mead-cups—she loved the people—to the hands of the warriors. Hygelac began fairly to question his companion in the high hall: desire tormented him to know what adventures the Sea-Geats had had. "How did it befall you on the journey, dear Beowulf, when suddenly thou didst resolve to seek conflict far over the salt water, battle in Heorot?

But didst thou at all lessen the far-famed woe for Hrothgar, that illustrious prince? I was troubled about it with grief of heart, surging sorrows, nor trusted my dear man's undertaking. I entreated thee long that thou wouldst not meet the murderous fiend at all, but let the South-Danes themselves settle the strife with Grendel. I thank God that I can see thee sound."

Beowulf spoke, Ecgtheow's son: "It is known to many men, King Hygelac,—the mighty encounter, what contest there was between Grendel and me in the land where a long time he had done many deeds of sorrow and misery to the Victory-Scyldings. I avenged all that, so that none of Grendel's kinsmen on earth need ever boast of that turmoil in the night, who lives longest of that hateful race steeped in crime.

"I came first to the ring-hall to greet Hrothgar. So soon as he knew my mind, the mighty son of Healfdene appointed a seat for me beside his son. The company was joyful; never in all my life under heaven's vault have I seen greater revelry among those sitting in hall. At times the glorious queen, the bond of peace between nations, passed through the hall, encouraged the youths. Often she gave some man a ring before she went to her seat. At times in the midst of the company Hrothgar's daughter bore the ale-cup to the men in turn. I heard those sitting around the hall call her Freawaru when she gave studded treasures to the warriors. Young and adorned with gold, she is betrothed to the gracious son of Froda. The friend of the Scyldings, the kingdom's protector has resolved upon it and counts it a wise plan that through the maid he settle strifes, many deadly feuds. Seldom anywhere, as a rule, after a prince's death does the spear rest, and but a little while, though the bride be good.

"Therefore it may be displeasing to the Lord of the Heathobards and to every thane among the people when he walks down the hall with the woman and the noble sons of the Danes are courteously entertained; on these strangers gleams the heritage of their own ancestors, the hard and ring-marked treasure of the Heathobards, as long as they might wield the weapons —until they led their dear comrades and their own lives to destruction in the shield play. Then at the beer-drinking speaks one who sees the ring-fitted sword, an old spearman who remembers all, the spear-death of men—the soul in him is angry—begins sad at heart to try the spirit of the young man through the thoughts of his breast, to awaken war-hate, and this word says: 'Mayst thou, my friend, know the sword which thy father beneath his war-helmet bore for the last time to the fight, the beloved blade, when the Danes slew him, the hardy Scyldings ruled over the battlefield, once Withergyld lay dead after the falling of heroes? Now here the son of I know not which of these slayers walks into the hall exulting in the trappings, beareth the precious thing which thou by right shouldst possess, and boasts of the slaughter.' So on every occasion he urges and reminds him with bitter words until the time comes that the woman's thane,[1] for the deeds of his father, sleeps after the sword's bite, stained with blood, having forfeited his life. The other[2] escapes thence alive, since he knows the land well. Then are broken on both sides the oaths of men. Afterwards deadly hates boil within Ingeld and, what with the after surgings of sorrow, the love for his wife grows colder. Therefore I do not count the favor of the Heathobards, their alliance with the Danes, to be sincere, their friendship strong.

"I shall speak further about Grendel that thou, giver of gifts, mayst well know how afterwards the strife of warriors fared. After Heaven's gem had glided over the fields, the angry demon came, dire night-scourge, to visit us where hale and hearty we guarded the hall. There his onslaught was upon Hondscio, death for the doomed man; he was the first to die, a girded warrior. For him, our honored thane, Grendel was a mouth-slayer, gulped down the whole body of the beloved man. Yet none the sooner would he go thence from the gold-hall empty-handed, the bloody-toothed slayer, his

[1] The young attendant who accompanies her.
[2] *i.e.*, the murderer

mind set on evil; but bold in his might he made trial of me, with ready hand gripped me. A pouch hung, wide and wondrous strange, made fast by cunningly wrought bands. It was all skilfully devised by a devil's craft from dragons' skins. Therein he would thrust me, a guiltless man, along with many others, the fierce doer of evil. It might not be so after I stood upright in anger. It is too long to tell how I repaid the folk-scather his dues for every one of his evils. There, my lord, I honored thy people with deeds. He escaped away, possessed life's joys a little while. However, his right hand remained behind in Heorot, and he went thence wretched,—fell sad at heart to the bottom of the mere. The friend of the Scyldings requited me liberally for the strife, with beaten gold, many a treasure, when morning came and we had sat down together. There was song and mirth. The aged Scylding with mind well stored told of things long ago. At times the brave one in battle called forth the joy of the harp, the wood noted for mirth; at times the great-hearted king told a tale true and moving, at times related in fitting wise a wondrous story. At times again the warrior, full of years and bound by age, began to mourn his youth, his strength in battle. His breast heaved within him when, with the wisdom of many winters, he called to mind many things. So there inside we took our pleasure the whole day long, until another night came to men. Soon then, indeed, was Grendel's mother eager for revenge; in sorrowful mood she journeyed. Death had taken away her son—war-hate of the Weders. The hideous wife avenged her offspring, in her fury killed a thane: there life departed from Æschere, a counsellor old and wise. Nor when morning came could the Dane-folk consume him with fire, the death-wearied man, nor lay the one they loved on the funeral pyre. She bore the body away in her fiendish embrace under the mountain stream. That was to Hrothgar the greatest sorrow that long befell the people's lord. Then the prince, sorely troubled in mind, implored me by thy life that I should do earlship in the press of waves, should venture my life, do a glorious deed. He promised me reward. Then, as is well known, I found the grim and terrible keeper of the flood. There to us two for a while was joining of hands. The wave seethed with blood, and I cut off the head of Grendel's mother with a mighty sword in the battle-chamber. Not easily thence did I escape with life. I was not yet doomed to die. Instead, the protector of earls, the son of Healfdene, again gave me many treasures.

XXXI[1]

BEOWULF CONCLUDES HIS STORY, GIVES HYGELAC ALL OF HROTHGAR'S GIFTS, AND IN TURN IS REWARDED BY HYGELAC

"So the people's king lived virtuously. In no wise did I miss my reward, the meed of my might, but the son of Healfdene gave me treasures at my own choice. I wish to bring them to thee, King Hygelac, to present them with right good will. Truly all my happiness is dependent on thee. Save thee, Hygelac, I have few close kinsmen."

He bade them bring in the boar-crested banner, the battle towering helmet, the gray byrnie, the splendid war-sword, after which he uttered this speech: "This armor Hrothgar, the wise king, gave me. In a word he bade that I should first tell thee its history. He said that King Heregar, Lord of the Scyldings, had had it a long while; yet none the sooner would he

[1] There are no sections numbered XXIX and XXX in the manuscript, although nothing seems to be lost.

give the breast-garments to his son, bold Heoroweard, though he was dear to him. Enjoy it all well!"

I heard that four dappled horses alike in speed followed the trappings. He made him a present of horses and treasures. So shall a kinsman do and in no case weave a net of treachery for the other by secret wiles, or prepare death for his comrade. To Hygelac, strong in battle, his nephew was very dear; each was mindful of the other's good. I heard tell that he gave to Hygd the necklace splendid with wondrous jewels, which Wealtheow gave to him, the King's daughter, together with three horses, graceful and brightly saddled. Ever after, when she had received the ring, her breast was adorned with it.

So the son of Ecgtheow showed himself brave, a man known in war for his good deeds, and bore himself with honor. He did not slay his hearth-companions when they were flushed with drink; his mind was not cruel, though, stern in battle, he ruled with strength greatest among mankind, the generous gift that God had given him. He had been long despised, for the sons of the Geats did not count him good, nor would the Lord of the Weders honor him with much on the mead-bench. They felt sure he was slothful, an atheling without spirit. Change came to the well-honored man from each of his griefs.

Then the protector of earls, the war-famed king, bade them fetch in Hrethel's legacy, adorned with gold. As for treasures, there was nothing better in the way of a sword among the Geats. He laid it in Beowulf's lap and gave him seven thousand hides,[1] a house and a princely seat. By both jointly the land was inherited in the country, their ancestral estate, though the other more especially had wide domain because he was of higher rank.

[1] A measure of land, sufficient to support a family.

HOW BEOWULF BECAME KING. OF THE DRAGON THAT GUARDED THE HOARD

Afterwards it happened in later days through clashes of battle when Hygelac lay dead and battle-swords beneath shields became the death of Heardred,—when the stern warriors, the Heatho-Scylfings, sought him among the victors and violently attacked the nephew of Hereric,—that then the broad kingdom came into the hands of Beowulf. He ruled well fifty winters—the king was then old, the aged defender of the land—until on dark nights one began to hold sway, a dragon, that on the high heath watched over some treasure-hoard, a high stone barrow.[2] A path lay beneath, unknown to men. Therein went some man, I know not who, made his way forward nigh to the heathen hoard, took in his hand a large cup, tawny with gold. Nor did he[3] afterwards conceal it, though while sleeping he had been tricked by the thief's cunning. That the people, the neighboring nation of warriors, found out; they realized that he was angry.

XXXII

THE MOUND, THE HOARD, AND THE DRAGON'S WRATH

It was not of his own accord that he broke into the dragon's board, nor by his own wish,—he who did the dragon wrong—but for sore distress the slave of I know not whom among the children of men fled from angry blows and, in want of shelter, got inside, a guilty man. Soon terror stood in the heart of the visitor. Yet when the danger overtook

[2] mound
[3] The dragon.

him and the wretched fugitive fled from the dragon, he took the vessel with him.[1]

There were many such age-hallowed treasures in the earth-house as I know not what man in years past with careful thought hid them there, the vast legacy of a noble race, priceless things. Death took them all long ago and the one still of that company of men who wandered there longest, mourning for his friends, expected the same fate, and knew that he would be able to enjoy the long-hoarded treasure but for a little while. The barrow, newly prepared and ready, stood on the plain by a bluff near the sea, made secure by skilful concealment. There within, the keeper of rings bore the part of the treasure worthy of the hoard, the beaten gold. Few words he spoke:

"Now keep thou, earth, since heroes may not, the possessions of earls. Behold, in thee good men erst got it; death in battle, the terrible life-bale, took away each of the men of my people who gave up this life, the hall-joy of warriors. I have no one who may bear the sword or burnish the gold-fretted cup, precious drinking-bowl. The warrior band has passed elsewhere. The hard helmet, adorned with gold, shall be stripped of its ornaments; polishers sleep who were wont to burnish the war-masks; yea, too, the coat of mail that in battle survived the crash of shields and the bite of blades crumbles after the warrior. Nor may the ringed byrnie fare far with the war-chief, at the side of heroes; no more is there joy of the harp, the glee-beam's delight, nor does the good hawk fly through the hall, nor swift horse stamp in the town. Grim death hath sent on many of the race of the living!" So, sad of mood, he mourns his sorrows one after the other, wanders cheerless by day and night until death's surge reaches his heart.

The old night-spoiler found the joy-hoard standing open—he that with flaming breath seeks the mounds, the naked, baleful dragon—flies by night enveloped in fire. Earth-dwellers greatly fear him. His fate is to seek treasure in the ground where, old in winters, he guards heathen gold. Nor is it in any way the better for him.

So the folk-scather for three hundred winters held a mighty treasure-house in the earth, until a man made him angry in mood, bore to his liege lord the gold-fretted cup, entreated a bond of peace from his prince. Then was the treasure explored, the hoard of rings carried off, and his boon granted to the wretched man. His lord saw the ancient work of men for the first time.

When the dragon awoke, strife was renewed. He strode quickly along the rock; the stout-hearted one perceived the foe's tracks. He had stepped with furtive skill too far forward, too near the head of the dragon. So may one who is not yet doomed to die easily survive trouble and exile, he whom the grace of the Lord protects! The guardian of the hoard sought eagerly along the ground, would find the man who sorely dealt with him while he slept. Hot and savage of mood he often wandered outside, all about the mound; nor was any man there on the wasteland. Yet he rejoiced in war, in the work of battle. At length he went into the barrow and sought the cup. He soon perceived that some one had tampered with the gold, the noble treasures. The guardian waited impatiently until evening came. Then was the barrow's warden full of rage; the hateful creature would atone with fire for the precious drinking-bowl. Finally, with joy to the dragon was the day gone; he did not wish to wait longer by the wall, but went

[1] These two sentences are largely conjectural, the MS. being badly damaged at this point.

with flame, armed with fire. The beginning of his vengeance was terrible to the people in the land, even as it was soon ended, grievously for their treasure giver.

XXXIII

THE DRAGON'S DEVASTATION. BEOWULF PREPARES TO GO AGAINST HIM

Then the stranger began to spew forth flame, to burn the bright dwellings—the gleam of fire shone forth horribly to men. The hateful air-flyer would leave nothing alive there. The warfare of the dragon was widely seen, the violence of the wrathful one far and near, and how the war-scather persecuted and injured the Geat-folk. He hastened back to the hoard, the secret chamber, ere day time. He had enveloped the country in flame, in fire and burning. He trusted to his mound, to valor and his wall. But his hope played him false. Then was the horror made known to Beowulf, quickly in truth, for his own home, fairest of buildings, the gift seat[1] of the Geats, melted in the fiery waves. To the good king that was sorrow of heart, greatest of griefs. The wise ruler thought that against the old law he had sorely offended God, the eternal Lord. His breast seethed within with dark thoughts, as was not usual with him. The fire-dragon had consumed with flame the stronghold of the people, the island from without, their fortress. Against him, therefore, the war-king, Lord of the Weders, planned revenge. The protector of warriors bade them make for him a wondrous war-shield all of iron. He well knew that a wooden buckler would not help him, linden against fire. The age-honored atheling must abide the end of his fleeting days, of life in the world, and the dragon with him, though he had long held the treasure-hoard. The lord of rings scorned to seek the far-flier with a host, a great force. He did not fear the conflict, nor consider at all the serpent's valor, his might and courage, because he erst had passed through many contests, risking dangers, many crashes of battle, since as a victorious warrior he cleansed Hrothgar's hall and crushed to death in the fight Grendel's kin of the hateful race.

Not the least of hand-encounters was that where Hygelac was slain, when the king of the Geats in the onrush of battle, the people's lord, Hrethel's son, died of sword-draughts,[2] beaten down by brand. Thence Beowulf escaped by his own strength, swam with strong stroke. Alone he had on his arm thirty pieces of armor when he came to the sea. No cause had the Hetwaras[3] to exult in their fighting, who before bare shields against him. Few from among the warriors ever came again to visit their homes! Then the son of Ecgtheow swam over the expanse of water, wretched and solitary, back to his people. There Hygd offered him hoard and kingdom, the rings and the throne; she trusted not to her son, that he could guard the ancestral seat against outside nations, now that Hygelac was dead. Yet none the sooner might the wretched people prevail by any means upon the atheling to be lord over Heardred or to accept the rule. But he upheld him among the people with friendly counsel, with kindness and good will, until he was older and ruled the Weder-Geats.

Exiles sought him over the sea, the sons of Ohthere. They had rebelled against the Lord of the Scylfings, the best of the sea-kings who dispensed treasure in Sweden, a famous prince. That was

[1] Throne

[2] A fine figure, as Professor Gummere remarked,—the sword drinking the blood from the wound.

[3] A Frankish tribe on the lower Rhine.

the cause of Heardred's death.[1] There for his hospitality Hygelac's son, received his death wound, by the sword's strokes. Afterwards Ongentheow's son went to seek his home, after Heardred fell, and left Beowulf to occupy the throne, to rule the Geats. He was a good king!

XXXIV

BEOWULF SEEKS OUT THE DRAGON. HIS WORDS TO HIS MEN

In later days he bore in mind requital for the death of his lord, proved a friend to Eadgils in his miseries; with his people he assisted Ohthere's son over the wide sea, with men and arms. At last he took vengeance with grievous expeditions, deprived the king of life.

Thus had Ecgtheow's son come through each of his troubles safely, of his dire conflicts and works of courage, until that one day when he must fight against the dragon. One of twelve, the Lord of the Geats went enraged with anger to behold the serpent. He had learned whence the feud arose, the affliction of warriors. The wondrous treasure-cup had come into his possession through the finder's hand. He who caused the beginning of the strife was the thirteenth man in the company; a captive, wretched and sorrowful in mind, he must lead the way to the plain. Against his will he went, for he knew the lonely chamber in the earth, the cave under ground near the ocean's surge, the tumult of waves. Within it was full of jewels and things of price. The frightful guard, a ready war-maker, old under earth, watched over the golden treasures. It was no easy bargain for any man to reach it.

Then on the headland the king brave in battle, gold-friend of the Geats, sat down while he saluted his hearth companions. His spirit was heavy, restless and prepared for death. Fate was exceeding near, which must greet the aged man, seek his soul's hiding place, tear asunder life from body. Short then was the warrior's life, clothed in flesh.

Beowulf spoke, son of Ecgtheow: "In my youth I came through many storms of battle, hours of conflict. I remember it all. I was seven winters old when the prince of treasures, the people's lord, received me from my father. Hrethel, the king, watched over and kept me, gave me feast and fee, had my kinship in mind. I was never a whit less dear to him, a youth in the court, than his own children, Herebeald and Hæthcyn, or my own Hygelac. For the eldest a murderous deathbed was unjustly spread through the deeds of his brother, when Hæthcyn struck down his prince with an arrow from the horn-bow,[2] missed his mark and shot his kinsman, one brother the other with bloody shaft. That was a fight that could not be atoned for by gold; a great sin was done, full of anguish to the soul. Yet none the less must the youth give up his life unavenged.

"For it is sorrowful to an old man to live to see his son swing young on the gallows. Then may he utter his chant, a doleful song, when his son hangs as a joy to the raven, and he, old and feeble, can give him no help. Always will he be reminded each morning of his son's journey hence. He does not care to wait for another heir within the court when

[1] When Ohthere, the Swedish king, died, his brother Onela seized the throne. Ohthere's nephews, Eanmund and Eadgils, were forced to flee. They took refuge among the Geats at the court of Heardred. Onela invaded Geatland, and Heardred and Eanmund were slain. Eadgils somehow escaped, later to attack his uncle with the aid of the Geats, and, when Onela was slain, to succeed to the throne (A.D. 530). Meanwhile, after Heardred's death, Onela had returned home and Beowulf became king of the Geats. (See *Beowulf*, ed. Klaeber, p. xl.)

[2] So called either because of its shape or because, as was often the case, the bow was tipped with horn.

the one has suffered deeds of violence through death's compulsion.

"Grief-saddened, he sees in his son's dwelling the wine-hall deserted, his resting-place wind-swept, bereft of joy. The hanged man sleeps, the warrior in his grave. There is no sound of harp, no joy in dwelling, as there was of old.

XXXV

BEOWULF FINISHES SPEAKING. THE FIGHT BEGINS

"He goes then to his chamber, sings a sorrowful song, one after another; all has seemed too vast, his lands and home. So the Shield of the Weders had sorrow surging in his heart for Herebeald. In no way could he punish the murderer for the feud. None the sooner might he wreck his hate upon the warrior by hostile acts, though he was not dear to him. Then for the sorrow that too sorely befell him, he gave up the joy of men and chose God's light. To his offspring he left, as a prosperous man does, his land and cities when he went from life.

"Then was wrong-doing and strife between Swedes and Geats over the wide water, mutual quarrel, cruel enmity, after Hrethel died and Ongentheow's sons were bold and eager for war; they would not keep peace over the sea, but often did dire slaughter around Hreosnabeorh. That my kinsman avenged, the feuds and crimes, as it was well known, though one paid with his life, a hard bargain. For Hæthcyn, Lord of the Geats, the war proved fatal. Then in the morning, as I heard tell, one kinsman avenged the other with the sword's edge upon the slayer, when Ongentheow sought out Eofor. His war-helmet split asunder; the aged Scylfing fell, deadly pale. His hand remembered many a fight; it withheld not death-blows.

"With the bright sword I repaid him in battle for the treasures he gave me, as it was granted to me to do. He gave me land, a home and its enjoyment. There was no need for him to seek among Gifthas or Spear-Danes for an inferior [1] warrior, to buy him with treasure. Always I would be to the fore in the troop, alone in front, and so forever I shall do battle while this sword endures that has often served me, early and late, since I slew Dæghrefn before the hosts, the Hugas' [2] champion. He might not then bring trappings, the breast ornament, to the Frisian king, but fell in the fight, the guardian of the standard, an atheling valiantly. Nor was the sword his slayer; but a hostile grasp crushed his body and the surgings of his heart. Now shall the blade's edge, hand and the hard sword, do battle for the hoard."

Beowulf spoke, uttered his war-boast for the last time: "I have ventured many battles in youth; yet, as wise guardian of the people, will I seek fight, do work of valor, if the fell spoiler will come out from his cavern to meet me." Then he greeted each of his men, valiant warriors, his own dear companions, for the last time: "I would not bear sword or weapon against the dragon if I knew how else I might clutch at the fiend with hand-grip, as I did against Grendel; but here I expect hot battle-fire, his breath and venom. Therefore I have on shield and byrnie. I will not flee from the mound's keeper a foot's length, but it shall be to us at the wall as Fate decrees, the lord of every man. I am fearless of mood and shall refrain from boasting against the monster. Abide ye at the mound, protected by byrnies, warriors in arms, which of us two may the better endure his wound

[1] Inferior, because foreign.
[2] Franks

after the deadly fight. It is no venture of yours, nor any man's power save mine alone, that he may fight with the demon, may do earlship. I shall valiantly win the gold, or war, the terrible life-bale, shall take your lord!"

Then the renowned warrior arose beside his shield, brave under helmet, bore his coat of mail under the stone cliff, trusted to the strength of one man. Such is not a coward's enterprise! Then he who, good in the virtues of men, had endured many battles, the crashes of war, when troops met in onrush, saw by the wall a stone arch standing and a stream bursting out of the mound. The water of the stream was hot from the deadly fire. Nor might one without burning go near the treasure at any time, nor pass through the passageway on account of the dragon's fire.

From his breast, the Lord of the Weder-Geats let words fare forth, for he was angry; the stout-hearted one shouted. His voice, clear in battle, entered resounding under the hoary stone. Hate was stirred up; the guardian of the hoard recognized the voice of man. There was no longer time to sue for peace. First from out of the stone came the breath of the monster, the hot battle-fume. The earth resounded. The warrior under the mound, the Lord of the Geats, turned his shield against the grim stranger. Then was the heart of the dragon urged to seek battle. The good war-king had drawn his sword, the old heirloom, sharp of edge. In each of the foes there was horror of the other. Stout-hearted, the lord of princes stood against his tall shield when the serpent quickly coiled together. In his armor he waited. Then burning, the coiled monster went gliding, hastening to his fate. The shield indeed protected the glorious prince in life and body a shorter time than his mind desired. There for the first time in his life he might not prevail, since Fate did not decree victory for him in the battle. The Lord of the Geats lifted up his hand, smote the creature of hideous hue with his sword so that its edge gave way, brown blade against bone; it bit less strongly than the folk's king had need for, hard pressed with cares. Then after the battle-stroke the barrow's guard was in a savage mood, and threw out his murderous fire. The flames leapt far. The friend of the Geats did not boast of glorious victories. His battle brand failed, naked in the fight, as it should not, a blade good from old times. That was no pleasant journey when the famous son of Ecgtheow would leave the earth. Against his will he must inhabit a dwelling elsewhere. So must every man give up the days that are lent him.

It was not long before the raging foes again met each other. The guardian of the treasure took heart anew; his breast heaved with his breathing. Enveloped in flame, he suffered distress who formerly had ruled a nation. His comrades, athelings' sons, did not stand around him in a band valiantly; rather they fled to the wood to save their lives. Only in one of them did his heart surge with sorrow. Nothing ever can loose the bonds of friendship for him who thinks aright.

XXXVI

WIGLAF GOES TO BEOWULF'S AID. BEOWULF IS WOUNDED

Wiglaf was his name, Wihstan's son, a fine warrior, prince of the Scylfings and Ælfhere's kinsman. He saw his lord under his war-helmet suffering the heat. He had in mind then the possessions which in the past he had granted him, the rich

dwelling place of the Waegmundings [1] and all the folk-rights which his father had. Nor could he then hold back. His hand gripped his shield, the yellow linden, and drew his time-tried sword. That was among men the legacy of Eanmund, the son of Ohthere, whom as a friendless exile Wihstan slew with the sword's edge, and carried off to his kinsman his brown-stained helmet, his ringed byrnie, and the ancient sword of giants. These Onela gave him, his kinsman's war-weeds, ready armor, without speaking of the feud, though he had killed his brother's son. He kept the trappings many half-years, sword and byrnie, until his son [2] could do works of valor like his father before him. He gave him, among the Geats, war-gear, a countless store of every kind, when he departed from life, went on his way an old man.

That was the first time for the youth that he should stand the shock of battle with his lord. Nor did his spirit melt, nor his kinsman's legacy fail him in the fight: this the serpent learned when they had come together.

Wiglaf spoke,—his heart was heavy: "I remember the time, as we were drinking mead, that we swore to our lord who gave us rings in the beer-hall that we would repay him for the war-gear, the helmets and hard swords, if need such as this ever befell him. That is why he chose us from the company, of his own will, for this adventure, considered us worthy of glorious deeds, and gave us the gifts,—because he counted us good spearmen, bold helmet-bearers,—though our king thought to do this brave work alone, the nation's protector, since he most of any man had done high deeds, daring works. Now the day has come that our liege lord has need of strength, of good warriors. Let us go to him, help our war-chief whilst the heat exists, the grim fire-terror. As for me, God knows I had much rather that the fire should clasp my body with my gold-giver. It does not seem to me fitting that we should bear our shields back home unless we first may kill the foe, protect the life of the Weders' prince. I well know that his former deeds do not merit that he alone of the host of the Geats should suffer affliction, should fall in battle. Sword and helmet, byrnie and battle-corselet shall be for a common purpose to both of us."

He strode then through the deadly flames, bore his helmet to the support of his lord, and few words spoke: "Beloved Beowulf, do all fittingly as thou in early life long since didst vow, that thou wouldst not let thy glory decline while living. Now must thou, a warrior of spirit, famed for deeds, defend thy life with all thy might. I will help thee."

After these words the angry dragon, the terrible foe, came a second time to attack his enemies, the hateful men. The buckler was burnt to the boss by the flames; his byrnie could not help the youthful warrior. But the young man quickly leapt under his kinsman's shield, for his own was consumed by the fire. Then again the warrior king was mindful of glory, smote mightily with his battle-sword, that it stuck in the serpent's head, driven by wrath. Nægling [3] burst asunder; Beowulf's sword, old and gray of hue, failed in the fight. It was not granted to him that blades of iron should help him in the battle. The hand was too strong and, I have heard, overtaxed every sword with its stroke when he bore to the fight the wondrously hard weapon. It was not at all the better for him.

Then for the third time the folk-ravisher, the fell fire-dragon, was mindful of the feud, and rushed upon the man of

[1] The family to which Wiglaf, Wihstan, and Beowulf belonged.
[2] Wiglaf
[3] The name of Beowulf's sword.

renown when chance offered,—hot and battle-grim, clasped him all about the neck with his sharp tusks. He was bloodied with his life-blood. The blood surged forth in waves.

XXXVII

THEY KILL THE DRAGON, BUT BEOWULF'S WOUND BECOMES SERIOUS

Then at the king's need, as I heard tell, the earl, upstanding, showed valor, strength and courage, as was his nature. He did not attack the head; nevertheless the bold warrior's hand was burnt when he helped his kinsman by striking the fell stranger somewhat lower. Thus did the warrior in arms, so that the sword plunged in, shining and gold-adorned; wherefore the fire afterwards began to grow less. Then the king himself still had control of his senses, drew the war-knife, keen and battle-sharp, that he wore on his byrnie. The protector of the Weders slashed the serpent in the middle. They cut down the fiend—strength drove out life; together the warrior kinsmen had destroyed him. Such should a warrior be, a thane in need! That was the last hour of victory for the king in his deeds, his last work in this world.

Then the wound which the earth-dragon had given him began to swell and burn. He was soon aware that the venom within him was boiling fiercely in his breast. The warrior wise in thought went then and sat on a seat by the wall. He looked upon the work of giants, saw how the eternal earth-hall held within it stone vaults supported by pillars. With his hand the noble thane bathed his blood-stained lord with water, the far-famed king, spent with battle, and unfastened his helmet.

Beowulf spoke—spoke over his wound, a mortal hurt. He well knew that he had lived his time, had enjoyed his share of earth's pleasure. All his number of days had passed; death was very near: "Now I should have liked to give these battle-weeds to my son, if any heir belonging to my body had thus been granted me. I have ruled this people fifty winters. There was no folk-king, not any of the neighboring tribes, that durst harm with swords or oppress me with terror. I awaited my time on earth, held my own well, nor sought treacherous strife or swore many oaths wrongfully. For all this, now sick from death-wounds, I may rejoice; for the Ruler of Men shall have no need to call me to account for the murder of kinsmen when my life passes from its body. Quickly go thou, dear Wiglaf, to examine the hoard under the gray rock, now that the dragon lies dead, sleeps sorely wounded, bereft of the treasure. Be now swift, that I may well see the ancient wealth, may look upon the store of gold, the precious jewels, that I may the more softly for the wealth of treasure leave my life and the realm that I have long held."

XXXVIII

BEOWULF IS SHOWN THE TREASURE. HIS DYING SPEECH

Then straightway, as I heard, the son of Wihstan, after these words, obeyed his wounded lord, battle-sick, bore his byrnie, the woven corselet, under the roof of the barrow. The bold young thane saw as he went victorious along the seat many a precious jewel, gold glistening as it lay on the ground, wonders on the wall, the serpent's den, the ancient night-flier's, and cups standing, vessels of former men, stripped of their ornaments. There was many a helmet, old and rusty, and a mass

of bracelets cunningly twisted. (Easily may wealth, gold on earth, become master of every man, hide it who will!) Likewise he saw hanging high above the hoard a banner all golden, the greatest of hand-wonders, woven by fingers' skill. From it a gleam of light shone, so that he could see the floor and perceive the jewels. No sight of the dragon was there, for the sword had carried him off. Then, as I heard, a man plundered the hoard in the mound, the old work of giants, loaded in his arms cups and dishes at his own choice. He took a banner, too, brightest of beacons. The sword of his dear lord [1]—the edge was iron—had wounded him who for a long time was guardian of the treasure, bore a fire terror, hot before the hoard, fiercely seething at midnight until he died murderously. The messenger was in haste, eager to return, urged on by the precious things. Anxiety weighed upon him, and he was troubled in mind, whether he should find still alive the King of the Weders, passing sick, where he had left him. Then with the treasures he found his lord bathed in blood, the far-famed king at life's end. Again he began to sprinkle him with water until a word's point broke through his breast-hoard.

The king spoke, the old man, sadly—he saw the gold: "I say thanks with words to the Lord, to the King of Glory, the eternal God, for all the treasures which I here look upon, for that I have been able ere my death-day to win such for my people. Now I have bartered my old life for the treasure-hoard; attend ye further to the needs of my people. I may not remain here longer. Bid the battle-brave build a mound, splendid after the funeral pyre, on a bluff of the sea. So shall it tower high on Hronesness, a remembrance to my people, that seafarers who drive their ships far over the darkness of the flood shall in after days call it Beowulf's mound." He took from his neck a golden ring, the brave king, and gave it to his thane, to the youthful warrior, gave him his gold-bound helmet, ring, and byrnie, bade him use them well: "Thou art the last of our kin, the Waegmundings. Fate has swept off all my kinsmen to their death, earls in their might. I must follow them." That was the last word of the aged man, of his heart's thought, ere he tasted the funeral pyre, hot ravaging flames. The soul went from his breast to seek the reward of men steadfast in right.

[1] *i.e.*, Beowulf.

XXXIX

WIGLAF REPROACHES HIS COMPANIONS

It was a sorrowful thing for the young man that on earth he should see his dear lord fare pitiably at life's end. The slayer likewise lay bereft of life, the terrible earth-dragon, pressed down with sore affliction. No longer might the coiled serpent rule the ring-board, for the blade's edges, hard battle-nicked product of hammers, had carried him off, so that the far-flier fell to the ground, motionless from his wounds, near his treasure house. No more did he soar flying through the air at midnight, and show his form in the pride of his possessions, but he fell to the ground through the work of the warrior's hands. Indeed it has profited few men on earth, though mighty, and though they were bold in every deed, as I have heard, that they should make onslaught against the breath of a venomous foe or disturb with their hands a ring-hall if they find the guard awake, dwelling in the mound. By his death a store of noble treasures was paid for by Beowulf. Each had brought about the end of the life that was lent him.

It was not long then before the cowards

left the wood, the craven traitors, ten of them together, who before dared not to fight with javelins in their lord's great need. But shamefaced they bore their shields, their war-weeds, to where the aged warrior lay dead. They looked at Wiglaf. The warrior sat wearied, at his lord's shoulder, trying to revive him with water. He had no success. He could not keep on earth, though he wished it well, life in the chieftain, or alter aught of God's will. The judgment of God must prevail over every man in his deeds, as it even now does.

Then it was easy to get an angry answer from the youth for them that before had lost their courage. Wiglaf spoke, Wihstan's son, sad at heart as he looked on men he no longer loved: "Lo, well may he say who will speak the truth that the lord who gave you those priceless things, your war-trappings that you stand in there—as he often gave helmet and byrnie to those sitting on ale-benches in the hall, the prince to his thanes, the finest he could find anywhere far or near —that grievously he threw those war-weeds completely away [as was evident] when war came upon him. The folk-king had no cause to boast of his comrades in battle. Yet God, the Ruler of Victories, granted him that he avenged himself alone with the sword, when he had need of strength. I was able to give him a little protection in the fight, and began, however beyond my power, to help my kinsman. When I struck the deadly foe with my sword he was ever the weaker— the fire surged less strongly from his head. Defenders too few thronged around their lord when his hour came. Now shall the receiving of treasure and giving of swords cease, all comfort and joy of inheritance to your kin. Every man of your kindred must wander, stripped of his land-right, when athelings from afar learn of your flight, your inglorious deed. Death is better to every man than a life of disgrace!"

XL

A MESSENGER TAKES WORD TO THE GEATS OF BEOWULF'S DEATH

He bade, then, convey news of the fight to the enclosure up over the sea-cliff, where the warrior band all day long had sat sorrowful, the warriors, awaiting either the death or the return of their beloved one. Little was he who rode up the headland silent about the startling message, but truly he said in the presence of all: "Now is the King of the Weder-folk, Lord of the Geats, fast on his death-bed, occupies the bed of slaughter through the deeds of the serpent. Beside him lies the deadly foe, sick from knife-wounds; with a sword he could in no wise wound the demon. Wiglaf, Wihstan's son, sits over Beowulf, one earl over the other who lies lifeless, keeps watch in sorrow of soul over friend and foe.

Now the people may expect a time of war when once the King's death becomes widely known to the Franks and Frisians. The stern strife with the Hugas was begun when Hygelac came faring to the Frisians' land with a sea-force where the Hetwaras attacked him in battle, quickly brought it about by their greater strength that the armed warrior should fall, should die among his band. No treasures did the leader give to his host. Ever afterwards the favor of the Merovingian was denied us.

Nor do I at all expect peace or good faith from the Swede-folk, for it was widely known that Ongentheow deprived of life Hæthcyn, Hrethel's son, beside Ravenswood,—when in their overweening pride the Geat-folk first sought the War-Scylfings. Soon the wise father of Ohthere, old and terrible, struck a blow in return, cut down the sea-king, rescued his wife —the old man saved the aged woman—stripped of her gold, Onela's mother and Ohthere's. And then he pursued his mortal foes until with difficulty they escaped to Ravenswood, lordless. With a mighty force he besieged the survivors.

worn out by their wounds; he often vowed woe to the wretched band the whole night long, said that in the morning he would kill some with the sword's edge, others on the gallows-tree, to be a delight to the birds. With the dawn consolation came again to the down-hearted when they heard Hygelac's horn and trumpet, the sound, as the good king came following in their tracks with a host of his people.

XLI

THE MESSENGER'S SPEECH CONTINUED

The bloody path of Swedes and Geats, the deadly conflict of men, was visible far and wide, how the peoples stirred up strife among them. Then the good king, old and very sad went with his kinsmen to seek his stronghold, the earl Ongentheow went farther up. He had heard of Hygelac's valor, the proud warrior's war might. He had no faith in resistance, that he could defend against the seamen,—protect from the ocean-farers,—his hoard, his children, and his wife. An old man, he fled back thence within the earth-wall. Then was chase given to the Swedefolk; Hygelac's banners passed over the field of refuge, when the Hrethlings[1] pressed forward to the enclosure. There the gray-haired Ongentheow was brought to bay by the sword's edge so that the people's king must submit to the single decree of Eofor. Wrathfully Wulf Wonreding struck him with a weapon, so that from the stroke blood gushed forth in streams from under his hair. Nevertheless he was not afraid, the aged Scylfing, but quickly repaid the murderous blow with a worse exchange after the people's king had turned towards him. Nor might the swift son of Wonred give the old man a return blow, for he had split the helmet on his head, so that, stained with blood, he must sink and fall to the ground. Still he was not doomed to die; he recovered, though his wounds hurt him. The bold thane of Hygelac, when his brother lay wounded, caused his broad sword, an old giant blade, to break giant helmet over the shield-wall. Then the king fell, the people's shepherd; he was struck to his soul. Then were there many who bound up his kinsman, quickly raised him up when it was granted to them that they might rule over the place of slaughter. Meanwhile one warrior plundered the other, took from Ongentheow his iron byrnie, his hard hilted sword, and his helmet with them. He carried the old man's trappings to Hygelac. The king received the ornaments and fittingly promised him reward among the people: and so he performed. The King of the Geats, Hrethel's son, when he got home, requited Eofor and Wulf with rich treasures for the storm of battle, gave each of them a hundred thousand[2] of land and twisted rings—nor durst any one on earth reproach him for the reward after they had achieved glory. And also he gave his only daughter to Eofor as an adornment to his home and a pledge of friendship.

"That is the feud and the enmity, the deadly hatred of men, as I foresee, that the Swede-folk will visit upon us when they hear that our lord is dead, who, after the death of heroes, had defended hoard and realm, the valiant Sea-Geats against their foes, did what was good for his people and still further performed noble deeds.

"Now it is best that we go quickly to look upon the king there and bear him, who gave us rings, to the funeral pyre. Nor shall one piece only melt with the hero, but there is a store of treasures, gold untold, terribly purchased, and rings now at the last bought with his own life. All these shall the flames consume, the fire enfold. No earl shall carry a treasure for remembrance, nor beautiful woman have a necklace on her neck, but, sorrowful of heart, bereft of gold, shall he wander in strange lands, not once but often, now that the leader in war has laid aside laughter, joy and mirth. Henceforth many a cold morning shall spear be clutched in the grasp, raised with the hand; no sound of harp shall raise the warriors, but the black raven, eager for the dead, shall speak much, shall tell the eagle how he fared at the feast when with the wolf he ravaged the slain."

So the hardy warrior told the grievous tale. He little lied in facts or words. The company all arose, went sadly, with tears flowing, beneath the Eagles' Cliff to gaze on the marvel. There on the sand, occupying his bed of rest, they found him lifeless who at earlier times had given them rings. There his last day had come to the good man when the war

[1] Geats

[2] The unit is not mentioned.

king, Lord of the Weders, died an uncommon death. First they saw there a stranger thing, the loathed serpent lying opposite him on the ground. The fire dragon, terrible in its frightful colors, was scorched by the flames. It was fifty feet long as it lay there. At night it had had joy of the air, and come back again to visit its den. Now it was fast in death, had had its last delight of earth-caves. By it stood bowls and cups; dishes and precious swords lay there rusty and eaten through, for they had been in the earth's embrace a thousand winters. Moreover, that mighty heritage, the gold of men of old, was bound by a charm that no man could touch the ring-hall unless God himself, true King of Victories, permitted him whom He would—he is the protector of men—to open the hoard, even such a man as seemed to him meet.

XLII

WIGLAF SPEAKS. THEY PLUNDER THE HOARD AND PUSH THE DRAGON INTO THE SEA

Then it was evident that his action did not prosper him who against right kept the jewels secretly within under the rock. The guard had slain a few; [1] then the feud was bitterly avenged. It is a mystery where the brave man shall meet the end of his life, when he may no longer dwell in the mead-house with his kinsmen. So it was with Beowulf when he sought the guardian of the mound and the contest. He himself did not know through what his parting from the world should be. The famous princes who put the treasure there had laid a curse on it until doomsday so that the warrior who should plunder the place should be guilty of sin, confined in heathen temples, bound with Hell-bonds, grievously punished. He was not gold-greedy; he had before more certainly known the favor of possession.

Wiglaf spoke, Wihstan's son: "Oft shall many a man, for the sake of one, suffer grief as has happened to us. Nor could we persuade our beloved Lord, guardian of the realm, that he should not attack the warden of the gold but should let him lie where he had long been, live in his dwelling place until the world's end, keep his destined lot. The hoard is seen, cruelly won. Fate was too strong that drove the man hither. I was in there and surveyed it all, the treasures of the chamber, when I was permitted. Not through friendly means was the entrance granted, in under the rock. Hastily I seized with my hands a mighty burden of treasures, bore it out hither to my king. He was still alive then, wise and fully conscious. Sorrowfully the aged man said many things, and bade me greet you, sent word that ye should build, on account of your friend's deeds, a high mound where the funeral pyre shall stand, great and glorious, as he was the worthiest warrior of men far and wide throughout the earth while he might enjoy the wealth of his town. Let us now hasten a second time to see and seek the multitude of precious jewels, the marvel beneath the rock. I will show you, so that at close view you may look upon the many rings and the broad gold. Let the bier be speedily prepared when we come out, and then let us bear our lord, beloved man, to where he shall long remain in the Ruler's keeping."

Then the son of Wihstan, the warrior brave in battle, bade many men, owners of houses, folk leaders, that they should carry wood for the funeral pyre from afar to where the good king lay: "Now shall the fire consume (the smoky flame shall grow) the chief of warriors, him

[1] An exaggeration. Beowulf only is meant.

who oft went through the shower of iron when the storm of arrows, driven by bow strings, sped over the shield wall, when the shaft, equipped with feather gear, did its duty, urged forth its barb."

Thereupon the wise son of Wihstan called forth from the host seven thanes of the king, and these the best, himself went as one of eight warriors under the baleful roof. One bore in his hand a torch, who went at the head. It was not by lot, who should plunder the hoard, when the warriors saw any part remaining in the hall, lying unwatched and perishing. Little did any man regret that they should speedily carry out the precious treasures. The dragon, moreover, they pushed over the cliff, let the wave take the serpent, the sea enfold the warden of the jewels. Then was the twisted gold, of every kind beyond measure, loaded on the wagon, and the warrior, hoar hero, was borne to Hronesness.

XLIII

THE WARRIORS' LAST TRIBUTE TO BEOWULF

Then the Geatsfolk prepared for him a splendid funeral pile on the ground, hung with helmets, with shields and bright byrnies, as he had asked. Lamenting, the warriors laid in the midst of it the glorious king, their dear lord. Then the warsmen began to kindle on the mound the greatest of pyres. The smoke rose black above the flame, the roaring fire mingled with lamentation—the tumult of winds subsided—until, hot at his breast, it had crumbled the house of bones. Downcast in heart, they gave voice to their sorrow, bemoaned their lord's death. Likewise an aged woman [1] with hair bound up, sorrowing for Beowulf, sang a song of lament, uttered over and over her sore dread of the evil day to come, the much slaughter, the warrior's terror, shame and captivity. Heaven swallowed the smoke.

Then on the cliff the Weder-folk built a mound, high and broad, visible from afar to seafarers, and completed in ten days the hero's beacon, built a wall around the ashes, as worthily as men of most skill could devise. In the mound they placed rings and jewels, all such trappings as hostile men had taken from the hoard. They let the earth keep the treasures of earls, gold in the ground, where it even now remains as useless to men as it was before. Then around the barrow rode the battle-brave sons of athelings, twelve in all, who were moved to voice their grief and bemoan their king, to chant an elegy and speak about the man. They praised his courage and his deeds of valor—valued him highly—as it is fitting that one should praise with words his lord, heartily love him, when he shall be led forth from his body.

So the Geat-folk, his hearth companions, sorrowed for their lord's death, said that he was the mildest of men and of kings the kindest, gentlest to his people and most eager to deserve fame.

[1] Some interpret this as *widow*, but whether Beowulf's widow is meant seems doubtful.

THE ROMANCE: SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

THE romance is a story of adventure, fictitious and frequently supernatural, usually containing a love interest. It differs from the epic in being generally less unified and more episodic; in having for its hero a *type* of chivalrous manhood rather than a strongly individualized character like Beowulf; and in having in place of heroic simplicity a leaning towards sentiment and a general spirit of sophistication. It is courtly rather than popular in tone, as would be expected of a type of literature originally produced for the upper classes. In form it may be either in prose or verse.

The medieval romance came into existence in the twelfth century in France and in France it attained its highest development. Some of the romances in French may have been composed in England. Certainly after the Norman Conquest in 1066, when French became the language of the upper classes in England, conditions were such for over two hundred years that French romances would have been as acceptable in England as in France. And so in fact they were. In the thirteenth century, however, partly no doubt because of the growing familiarity of the upper classes with English, partly because interest in romances was spreading to other classes, romances began to appear in English. By far the larger part of the English romances are translations or adaptations of French originals; and they thus illustrate the much closer dependence of English upon French literature during the middle ages than at any subsequent period.

It is customary to classify romances into three groups according to the subjects of which they treat: the *Matter of Rome,* which includes romances of Troy and of Alexander the Great; the *Matter of France,* which concerns stories of Charlemagne and the nobles of France; and the *Matter of Britain,* by which we mean romances of King Arthur and his knights. It is to this last named group that the present romance belongs.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is generally admitted to be the finest of the English romances. It was written about 1370, — that is, by a contemporary of Chaucer. The author's name is unknown, but we have at least three other poems almost certainly by him, *Purity, Patience,* and the *Pearl.* These four works mark him as one of the great writers of outstanding individuality in the fourteenth century. The hero of this romance, Sir Gawain, is Arthur's nephew, one of the most popular figures in the Arthurian cycle. Everywhere in the English romances, except in one or two later examples, he is the perfect knight, the embodiment of honor, courtesy,

and valor. The episode in which he figures here is an excellent illustration of the stuff of romance. The prose translation (the original is in verse) is that of Miss Jessie L. Weston.

SIR GAWAIN AND THE GREEN KNIGHT

I

After the siege and the assault of Troy, when that burg was destroyed and burnt to ashes, and the traitor tried for his treason, the noble Æneas and his kin sailed forth to become princes and patrons of well-nigh all the Western Isles. Thus Romulus built Rome (and gave to the city his own name, which it bears even to this day); and Ticius turned him to Tuscany; and Langobard raised him up dwellings in Lombardy; and Felix Brutus sailed far over the French flood,[1] and founded the kingdom of Britain, wherein have been war and waste and wonder, and bliss and bale, ofttimes since.

And in that kingdom of Britain have been wrought more gallant deeds than in any other; but of all British kings Arthur was the most valiant, as I have heard tell; therefore will I set forth a wondrous adventure that fell out in his time. And if ye will listen to me, but for a little while, I will tell it even as it stands in story stiff and strong, fixed in the letter, as it hath long been known in the land.

King Arthur lay at Camelot upon a Christmas-tide, with many a gallant lord and lovely lady, and all the noble brotherhood of the Round Table. There they held rich revels with gay talk and jest; one while they would ride forth to joust and tourney, and again back to the court to make carols; for there was the feast holden fifteen days with all the mirth that men could devise, song and glee, glorious to hear, in the daytime, and dancing at night. Halls and chambers were crowded with noble guests, the bravest of knights and the loveliest of ladies, and Arthur himself was the comeliest king that ever held a court. For all this fair folk were in their youth, the fairest and most fortunate under heaven, and the king himself of such fame that it were hard now to name so valiant a hero.

Now the New Year had but newly come in, and on that day a double portion was served on the high table to all the noble guests, and thither came the king with all his knights, when the service in the chapel had been sung to an end. And they greeted each other for the New Year, and gave rich gifts, the one to the other (and they that received them were not wroth, that may ye well believe!), and the maidens laughed and made mirth till it was time to get them to meat. Then they washed and sat them down to the feast in fitting rank and order, and Guinevere the queen, gaily clad, sat on the high daïs. Silken was her seat, with a fair canopy over her head, of rich tapestries of Tars, embroidered, and studded with costly gems; fair she was to look upon, with her shining gray eyes, a fairer woman might no man boast himself of having seen.

But Arthur would not eat till all were served, so full of joy and gladness was he, even as a child; he liked not either to lie long, or to sit long at meat, so worked upon him his young blood and his wild brain. And another custom he had also, that came of his nobility, that he would never eat upon an high day till he had been advised of some knightly deed, or some strange and marvelous tale, of his ancestors, or of arms, or of other ventures. Or till some stranger

[1] English Channel (*Mare Gallicum, Mare Britannicum*).

knight should seek of him leave to joust with one of the Round Table, that they might set their lives in jeopardy, one against another, as fortune might favor them. Such was the king's custom when he sat in hall at each high feast with his noble knights; therefore on that New Year tide, he abode, fair of face, on the throne, and made much mirth withal.

Thus the king sat before the high tables, and spake of many things; and there good Sir Gawain was seated by Guinevere the queen, and on her other side sat Agravain, *à la dure main;* both were the king's sister's sons and full gallant knights. And at the end of the table was Bishop Bawdewyn, and Ywain, King Urien's son, sat at the other side alone. These were worthily served on the daïs, and at the lower tables sat many valiant knights. Then they bare the first course with the blast of trumpets and waving of banners, with the sound of drums and pipes, of song and lute, that many a heart was uplifted at the melody. Many were the dainties, and rare the meats; so great was the plenty they might scarce find room on the board to set on the dishes. Each helped himself as he liked best, and to each two were twelve dishes, with great plenty of beer and wine.

Now I will say no more of the service, but that ye may know there was no lack, for there drew near a venture that the folk might well have left their labor to gaze upon. As the sound of the music ceased, and the first course had been fitly served, there came in at the hall door one terrible to behold, of stature greater than any on earth; from neck to loin so strong and thickly made, and with limbs so long and so great that he seemed even as a giant. And yet he was but a man, only the mightiest that might mount a steed; broad of chest and shoulders and slender of waist, and all his features of like fashion; but men marveled much at his color, for he rode even as a knight, yet was green all over.

For he was clad all in green, with a straight coat, and a mantle above; all decked and lined with fur was the cloth and the hood that was thrown back from his locks and lay on his shoulders. Hose had he of the same green, and spurs of bright gold with silken fastenings richly worked; and all his vesture was verily green. Around his waist and his saddle were bands with fair stones set upon silken work, 't were too long to tell of all the trifles that were embroidered thereon —birds and insects in gay gauds of green and gold. All the trappings of his steed were of metal of like enamel, even the stirrups that he stood in stained of the same, and stirrups and saddle-bow alike gleamed and shone with green stones. Even the steed on which he rode was of the same hue, a green horse, great and strong, and hard to hold, with broidered bridle, meet for the rider.

The knight was thus gaily dressed in green, his hair falling around his shoulders; on his breast hung a beard, as thick and green as a bush, and the beard and the hair of his head were clipped all round above his elbows. The lower part of his sleeves was fastened with clasps in the same wise as a king's mantle. The horse's mane was crisp and plaited with many a knot folded in with gold thread about the fair green, here a twist of the hair, here another of gold. The tail was twined in like manner, and both were bound about with a band of bright green set with many a precious stone; then they were tied aloft in a cunning knot, whereon rang many bells of burnished gold. Such a steed might no other ride, nor had such ever been looked upon in that hall ere that time; and all who saw that knight spake and said that a man might scarce abide his stroke.

The knight bore no helm nor hauberk,[1] neither gorget [2] nor breast-plate, neither shaft nor buckler to smite nor to shield, but in one hand he had a holly-bough, that is greenest when the groves are bare, and in his other an ax, huge and uncomely, a cruel weapon in fashion, if one would picture it. The head was an ell-yard long, the metal all of green steel and gold, the blade burnished bright, with a broad edge, as well shapen to shear as a sharp razor. The steel was set into a strong staff, all bound round with iron, even to the end, and engraved with green in cunning work. A lace was twined about it, that looped at the head, and all adown the handle it was clasped with tassels on buttons of bright green richly broidered.

The knight rideth through the entrance of the hall, driving straight to the high daïs, and greeted no man, but looked ever upwards; and the first words he spake were, "Where is the ruler of this folk? I would gladly look upon that hero, and have speech with him." He cast his eyes on the knights, and mustered [3] them up and down, striving ever to see who of them was of most renown.

Then was there great gazing to behold that chief, for each man marveled what it might mean that a knight and his steed should have even such a hue as the green grass; and that seemed even greener than green enamel on bright gold. All looked on him as he stood, and drew near unto him, wondering greatly what he might be; for many marvels had they seen, but none such as this, and phantasm and faërie did the folk deem it. Therefore were the gallant knights slow to answer, and gazed astounded, and sat stone still in a deep silence through that goodly hall, as if a slumber were fallen upon them. I deem it was not all for doubt,[4] but some for courtesy that they might give ear unto his errand.

Then Arthur beheld this adventurer before his high daïs, and knightly he greeted him, for fearful was he never. "Sir," he said, "thou art welcome to this place—lord of this hall am I, and men call me Arthur. Light thee down, and tarry awhile, and what thy will is, that shall we learn after."

"Nay," quoth the stranger, "so help me he that sitteth on high, 'twas not mine errand to tarry any while in this dwelling; but the praise of this thy folk and thy city is lifted up on high, and thy warriors are holden for the best and the most valiant of those who ride mail-clad to the fight. The wisest and the worthiest of this world are they, and well proven in all knightly sports. And here, as I have heard tell, is fairest courtesy; therefore have I come hither as at this time. Ye may be sure by the branch that I bear here that I come in peace, seeking no strife. For had I willed to journey in warlike guise I have at home both hauberk and helm, shield and shining spear, and other weapons to mine hand, but since I seek no war, my raiment is that of peace. But if thou be as bold as all men tell, thou wilt freely grant me the boon I ask."

And Arthur answered, "Sir Knight, if thou cravest battle here thou shalt not fail for lack of a foe."

And the knight answered, "Nay, I ask no fight; in faith here on the benches are but beardless children; were I clad in armor on my steed there is no man here might match me. Therefore I ask in this court but a Christmas jest, for that it is Yule-tide, and New Year, and there are here many fain for sport. If any one in this hall holds himself so hardy, so bold both of blood and brain, as to

[1] coat of mail
[2] piece of armor for throat
[3] inspected, surveyed
[4] fear

dare strike me one stroke for another, I will give him as a gift this ax, which is heavy enough, in sooth, to handle as he may list, and I will abide the first blow, unarmed as I sit. If any knight be so bold as to prove my words, let him come swiftly to me here, and take this weapon; I quit claim to it, he may keep it as his own, and I will abide his stroke, firm on the floor. Then shalt thou give me the right to deal him another, the respite of a year and a day shall he have. Now haste, and let see whether any here dare say aught."

Now if the knights had been astounded at the first, yet stiller were they all, high and low, when they had heard his words. The knight on his steed straightened himself in the saddle, and rolled his eyes fiercely round the hall; red they gleamed under his green and bushy brows. He frowned and twisted his beard, waiting to see who should rise, and when none answered he cried aloud in mockery, "What, is this Arthur's hall, and these the knights whose renown hath run through many realms? Where are now your pride and your conquests, your wrath, and anger, and mighty words? Now are the praise and the renown of the Round Table overthrown by one man's speech, since all keep silence for dread ere ever they have seen a blow!"

With that he laughed so loudly that the blood rushed to the king's fair face for very shame; he waxed wroth, as did all his knights, and sprang to his feet, and drew near to the stranger and said, "Now by heaven, foolish is thy asking, and thy folly shall find its fitting answer. I know no man aghast at thy great words. Give me here thine ax and I shall grant thee the boon thou hast asked." Lightly he sprang to him and caught at his hand, and the knight, fierce of aspect, lighted down from his charger.

Then Arthur took the ax and gripped the haft, and swung it round, ready to strike. And the knight stood before him, taller by the head than any in the hall; he stood, and stroked his beard, and drew down his coat, no more dismayed for the king's threats than if one had brought him a drink of wine.

Then Gawain, who sat by the queen, leaned forward to the king and spake, "I beseech ye, my lord, let this venture be mine. Would ye but bid me rise from this seat, and stand by your side, so that my liege lady thought it not ill, then would I come to your counsel before this goodly court. For I think it not seemly when such challenges be made in your hall that ye yourself should undertake it, while there are many bold knights who sit beside ye, none are there, methinks, of readier will under heaven, or more valiant in open field. I am the weakest, I wot, and the feeblest of wit, and it will be the less loss of my life if ye seek sooth. For save that ye are mine uncle, naught is there in me to praise, no virtue is there in my body save your blood, and since this challenge is such folly that it beseems ye not to take it, and I have asked it from ye first, let it fall to me, and if I bear myself ungallantly, then let all this court blame me."

Then they all spake with one voice that the king should leave this venture and grant it to Gawain.

Then Arthur commanded the knight to rise, and he rose up quickly and knelt down before the king, and caught hold of the weapon; and the king loosed his hold of it, and lifted up his hand, and gave him his blessing, and bade him be strong both of heart and hand. "Keep thee well, nephew," quoth Arthur, "that thou give him but the one blow, and if thou redest [1] him rightly I trow thou shalt well abide the stroke he may give thee after."

[1] managest

Gawain stepped to the stranger, ax in hand, and he, never fearing, awaited his coming. Then the Green Knight spake to Sir Gawain, "Make we our covenant ere we go further. First, I ask thee, knight, what is thy name? Tell me truly, that I may know thee."

"In faith," quoth the good knight, "Gawain am I, who give thee this buffet, let what may come of it; and at this time twelvemonth will I take another at thine hand with whatsoever weapon thou wilt, and none other."

Then the other answered again, "Sir Gawain, so may I thrive as I am fain to take this buffet at thine hand," and he quoth further, "Sir Gawain, it liketh me well that I shall take at thy fist that which I have asked here, and thou hast readily and truly rehearsed all the covenant that I asked of the king, save that thou shalt swear me, by thy troth, to seek me thyself wherever thou hopest that I may be found, and win thee such reward as thou dealest me to-day, before this folk."

"Where shall I seek thee?" quoth Gawain. "Where is thy place? By him that made me, I wot never where thou dwellest, nor know I thee, knight, thy court, nor thy name. But teach me truly all that pertaineth thereto, and tell me thy name, and I shall use all my wit to win my way thither, and that I swear thee for sooth, and by my sure troth."

"That is enough in the New Year, it needs no more," quoth the Green Knight to the gallant Gawain, "if I tell thee truly when I have taken the blow, and thou hast smitten me; then will I teach thee of my house and home, and mine own name, then mayest thou ask thy road and keep covenant. And if I waste no words then farest thou the better, for thou canst dwell in thy land, and seek no further. But take now thy toll, and let see how thou strikest."

"Gladly will I," quoth Gawain, handling his ax.

Then the Green Knight swiftly made him ready, he bowed down his head, and laid his long locks on the crown that his bare neck might be seen. Gawain gripped his ax and raised it on high, the left foot he set forward on the floor, and let the blow fall lightly on the bare neck. The sharp edge of the blade sundered the bones, smote through the neck, and clave it in two, so that the edge of the steel bit on the ground, and the fair head fell to the earth that many struck it with their feet as it rolled forth. The blood spurted forth, and glistened on the green raiment, but the knight neither faltered nor fell; he started forward with out-stretched hand, and caught the head, and lifted it up; then he turned to his steed, and took hold of the bridle, set his foot in the stirrup, and mounted. His head he held by the hair, in his hand. Then he seated himself in his saddle as if naught ailed him, and he were not headless. He turned his steed about, the grim corpse bleeding freely the while, and they who looked upon him doubted them much for the covenant.

For he held up the head in his hand, and turned the face towards them that sat on the high daïs, and it lifted up the eyelids and looked upon them and spake as ye shall hear. "Look, Gawain, that thou art ready to go as thou hast promised, and seek leally till thou find me, even as thou hast sworn in this hall in the hearing of these knights. Come thou, I charge thee, to the Green Chapel; such a stroke as thou hast dealt thou hast deserved, and it shall be promptly paid thee on New Year's morn. Many men know me as the knight of the Green Chapel, and if thou askest, thou shalt not fail to find me. Therefore it be-

hooves thee to come, or to yield thee as recreant." [1]

With that he turned his bridle, and galloped out at the hall door, his head in his hands, so that the sparks flew from beneath his horse's hoofs. Whither he went none knew, no more than they wist whence he had come; and the king and Gawain they gazed and laughed, for in sooth this had proved a greater marvel than any they had known aforetime.

Though Arthur the king was astonished at his heart, yet he let no sign of it be seen, but spake in courteous wise to the fair queen: "Dear lady, be not dismayed, such craft is well suited to Christmas-tide when we seek jesting, laughter, and song, and fair carols of knights and ladies. But now I may well get me to meat, for I have seen a marvel I may not forget." Then he looked on Sir Gawain, and said gaily, "Now, fair nephew, hang up thine ax, since it has hewn enough," and they hung it on the dossal [2] above the daïs, where all men might look on it for a marvel, and by its true token tell of the wonder. Then the twain sat them down together, the king and the good knight, and men served them with a double portion, as was the share of the noblest, with all manner of meat and of minstrelsy. And they spent that day in gladness, but Sir Gawain must well bethink him of the heavy venture to which he had set his hand.

II

This beginning of adventures had Arthur at the New Year; for he yearned to hear gallant tales, though his words were few when he sat at the feast. But now had they stern work on hand. Gawain was glad to begin the jest in the hall, but ye need have no marvel if the end be heavy. For though a man be merry in mind when he has well drunk, yet a year runs full swiftly, and the beginning but rarely matches the end.

For Yule was now over-past, and the year after, each season in its turn following the other. For after Christmas comes crabbed Lent, that will have fish for flesh and simpler cheer. But then the weather of the world chides with winter; the cold withdraws itself, the clouds uplift, and the rain falls in warm showers on the fair plains. Then the flowers come forth, meadows and grove are clad in green, the birds make ready to build, and sing sweetly for solace of the soft summer that follows thereafter. The blossoms bud and blow in the hedgerows rich and rank, and noble notes enough are heard in the fair woods.

After the season of summer, with the soft winds, when zephyr breathes lightly on seeds and herbs, joyous indeed is the growth that waxes thereout when the dew drips from the leaves beneath the blissful glance of the bright sun. But then comes harvest and hardens the grain, warning it to wax ripe ere the winter. The drought drives the dust on high, flying over the face of the land; the angry wind of the welkin wrestles with the sun; the leaves fall from the trees and light upon the ground, and all brown are the groves that but now were green, and ripe is the fruit that once was flower. So the year passes into many yesterdays, and winter comes again, as it needs no sage to tell us.

When the Michaelmas [3] moon was come in with warnings of winter, Sir Gawain bethought him full oft of his perilous journey. Yet till All Hallows Day [4] he lingered with Arthur, and on that day they made a great feast for the hero's sake, with much revel and richness of the Round Table. Courteous knights and

[1] coward, one who yields [2] hanging behind altar, daïs, etc.

[3] Sept. 29 [4] Nov. 1

comely ladies, all were in sorrow for the love of that knight, and though they spake no word of it, many were joyless for his sake.

And after meat, sadly Sir Gawain turned to his uncle, and spake of his journey, and said, "Liege lord of my life, leave from you I crave. Ye know well how the matter stands without more words; to-morrow am I bound to set forth in search of the Green Knight."

Then came together all the noblest knights, Ywain and Erec, and many another. Sir Dodinel le Sauvage, the Duke of Clarence, Launcelot and Lionel, and Lucan the Good, Sir Bors and Sir Bedivere, valiant knights both, and many another hero, with Sir Mador de la Porte, and they all drew near, heavy at heart, to take counsel with Sir Gawain. Much sorrow and weeping was there in the hall to think that so worthy a knight as Gawain should wend his way to seek a deadly blow, and should no more wield his sword in fight. But the knight made ever good cheer, and said, "Nay, wherefore should I shrink? What may a man do but prove his fate?"

He dwelt there all that day, and on the morn he arose and asked betimes for his armor; and they brought it unto him on this wise: first, a rich carpet was stretched on the floor (and brightly did the gold gear glitter upon it), then the knight stepped on to it, and handled the steel; clad he was in a doublet of silk, with a close hood, lined fairly throughout. Then they set the steel shoes upon his feet, and wrapped his legs with greaves, with polished knee-caps, fastened with knots of gold. Then they cased his thighs in cuisses [1] closed with thongs, and brought him the byrnie [2] of bright steel rings sewn upon a fair stuff. Well burnished braces they set on each arm with good elbow-pieces, and gloves of mail, and all the goodly gear that should shield him in his need. And they cast over all a rich surcoat,[3] and set the golden spurs on his heels, and girt him with a trusty sword fastened with a silken baldric.[4] When he was thus clad his harness was costly, for the least loop or latchet gleamed with gold. So armed as he was he hearkened Mass and made his offering at the high altar. Then he came to the king, and the knights of his court, and courteously took leave of lords and ladies, and they kissed him, and commended him to Christ.

With that was Gringalet ready, girt with a saddle that gleamed gaily with many golden fringes, enriched and decked anew for the venture. The bridle was all barred about with bright gold buttons, and all the covertures and trappings of the steed, the crupper and the rich skirts, accorded with the saddle; spread fair with the rich red gold that glittered and gleamed in the rays of the sun.

Then the knight called for his helmet, which was well lined throughout, and set it high on his head, and hasped it behind. He wore a light kerchief over the ventail,[5] that was broidered and studded with fair gems on a broad silken ribbon, with birds of gay color, and many a turtle and true-lover's knot interlaced thickly, even as many a maiden had wrought diligently for seven winter long. But the circlet [6] which crowned his helmet was yet more precious, being adorned with a device in diamonds. Then they brought him his shield, which was of bright red, with the pentangle painted thereon in gleaming gold. And why that noble prince bare the pentangle I am minded to tell you, though my tale tarry thereby. It is a sign that Solomon set ere-while, as betokening truth; for it is a figure with five

[1] thigh armor
[2] coat of mail
[3] loose robe worn over armor
[4] belt worn from shoulders to opposite hip
[5] armor protecting the neck
[6] ring or band

points and each line overlaps the other, and nowhere hath it beginning or end, so that in English it is called "the endless knot." And therefore was it well suiting to this knight and to his arms, since Gawain was faithful in five and five-fold, for pure was he as gold, void of all villainy and endowed with all virtues. Therefore he bare the pentangle on shield and surcoat as truest of heroes and gentlest of knights.

For first he was faultless in his five senses; and his five fingers never failed him; and all his trust upon earth was in the five wounds that Christ bare on the cross, as the Creed tells. And wherever this knight found himself in stress of battle he deemed well that he drew his strength from the five joys which the Queen of Heaven had of her Child. And for this cause did he bear an image of Our Lady on the one half of his shield, that whenever he looked upon it he might not lack for aid. And the fifth five that the hero used were frankness and fellowship above all, purity and courtesy that never failed him, and compassion that surpasses all; and in these five virtues was that hero wrapped and clothed. And all these, five-fold, were linked one in the other, so that they had no end, and were fixed on five points that never failed, neither at any side were they joined or sundered, nor could ye find beginning or end. And therefore on his shield was the knot shapen, red-gold upon red, which is the pure pentangle. Now was Sir Gawain ready, and he took his lance in hand, and bade them all *Farewell,* he deemed it had been for ever.

Then he smote the steed with his spurs, and sprang on his way, so that sparks flew from the stones after him. All that saw him were grieved at heart, and said one to the other, "By Christ, 't is great pity that one of such noble life should be lost! I' faith, 't were not easy to find his equal upon earth. The king had done better to have wrought more warily. Yonder knight should have been made a duke; a gallant leader of men is he, and such a fate had beseemed him better than to be hewn in pieces at the will of an elfish man, for mere pride. Who ever knew a king to take such counsel as to risk his knights on a Christmas jest?" Many were the tears that flowed from their eyes when that goodly knight rode from the hall. He made no delaying, but went his way swiftly, and rode many a wild road, as I heard say in the book.

So rode Sir Gawain through the realm of Logres,[1] on an errand that he held for no jest. Often he lay companionless at night, and must lack the fare that he liked. No comrade had he save his steed, and none save God with whom to take counsel. At length he drew nigh to North Wales, and left the isles of Anglesey[2] on his left hand, crossing over the fords by the foreland over at Holyhead,[3] till he came into the wilderness of Wirral,[4] where but few dwell who love God and man of true heart. And ever he asked, as he fared, of all whom he met, if they had heard any tidings of a Green Knight in the country thereabout, or of a Green Chapel? And all answered him, Nay, never in their lives had they seen any man of such a hue. And the knight wended his way by many a strange road and many a rugged path, and the fashion of his countenance changed full often ere he saw the Green Chapel.

Many a cliff did he climb in that unknown land, where afar from his friends he rode as a stranger. Never did he come to a stream or a ford but he found a foe before him, and that one so marvelous, so foul and fell, that it behooved him to fight. So many wonders did that

[1] England
[2] An island northwest of Wales.
[3] A town (now seaport) in Anglesey.
[4] District in western Cheshire, England.

knight behold, that it were too long to tell the tenth part of them. Sometimes he fought with dragons and wolves; sometimes with wild men that dwelt in the rocks; another while with bulls, and bears, and wild boars, or with giants of the high moorland that drew near to him. Had he not been a doughty knight, enduring, and of well-proved valor, and a servant of God, doubtless he had been slain, for he was oft in danger of death. Yet he cared not so much for the strife; what he deemed worse was when the cold clear water was shed from the clouds, and froze ere it fell on the fallow ground. More nights than enough he slept in his harness on the bare rocks, near slain with the sleet, while the stream leapt bubbling from the crest of the hills, and hung in hard icicles over his head.

Thus in peril and pain, and many a hardship, the knight rode alone till Christmas Eve, and in that tide he made his prayer to the Blessed Virgin that she would guide his steps and lead him to some dwelling. On that morning he rode by a hill, and came into a thick forest, wild and drear; on each side were high hills, and thick woods below them of great hoar oaks, a hundred together, of hazel and hawthorn with their trailing boughs interwined, and rough ragged moss spreading everywhere. On the bare twigs the birds chirped piteously, for pain of the cold. The knight upon Gringalet rode lonely beneath them, through marsh and mire, much troubled at heart lest he should fail to see the service of the Lord, who on that self-same night was born of a maiden for the cure of our grief; and therefore he said, sighing, "I beseech thee, Lord, and Mary thy gentle Mother, for some shelter where I may hear Mass, and thy matins at morn. This I ask meekly, and thereto I pray my Paternoster, Ave, and Credo." Thus he rode praying, and lamenting his misdeeds, and he crossed himself, and said, "May the Cross of Christ speed me."

Now that knight had crossed himself but thrice ere he was aware in the wood of a dwelling within a moat, above a lawn, on a mound surrounded by many mighty trees that stood round the moat. 'T was the fairest castle that ever a knight owned; built in a meadow with a park all about it, and a spiked palisade, closely driven, that enclosed the trees for more than two miles. The knight was ware of the hold from the side, as it shone through the oaks. Then he lifted off his helmet and thanked Christ and Saint Julian[1] that they had courteously granted his prayer, and hearkened to his cry. "Now," quoth the knight, "I beseech ye, grant me fair hostel." Then he pricked Gringalet with his golden spurs, and rode gaily towards the great gate, and came swiftly to the bridge end.

The bridge was drawn up and the gates close shut; the walls were strong and thick, so that they might fear no tempest. The knight on his charger abode on the bank of the deep double ditch that surrounded the castle. The walls were set deep in the water, and rose aloft to a wondrous height; they were of hard hewn stone up to the corbels, which were adorned beneath the battlements with fair carvings, and turrets set in between with many a loophole; a better barbican Sir Gawain had never looked upon. And within he beheld the high hall, with its tower and many windows with carven cornices, and chalk-white chimneys on the turreted roofs that shone fair in the sun. And everywhere, thickly scattered on the castle battlements, were pinnacles, so many that it seemed as if it were all wrought out of paper, so white was it.

The knight on his steed deemed it fair enough, if he might come to be sheltered within it to lodge there while that the

[1] Noted for his hospitality. See below, p. 79.

Holy-day lasted. He called aloud, and soon there came a porter of kindly countenance, who stood on the wall and greeted this knight and asked his errand.

"Good sir," quoth Gawain, "wilt thou go mine errand to the high lord of the castle, and crave for me lodging?"

"Yea, by S. Peter," quoth the porter. "In sooth I trow that ye be welcome to dwell here so long as it may like ye."

Then he went, and came again swiftly, and many folk with him to receive the knight. They let down the great drawbridge, and came forth and knelt on their knees on the cold earth to give him worthy welcome. They held wide open the great gates, and courteously he bade them rise, and rode over the bridge. Then men came to him and held his stirrup while he dismounted, and took and stabled his steed. There came down knights and squires to bring the guest with joy to the hall. When he raised his helmet there were many to take it from his hand, fain to serve him, and they took from him sword and shield.

Sir Gawain gave good greeting to the noble and the mighty men who came to do him honor. Clad in his shining armor they led him to the hall, where a great fire burnt brightly on the floor; and the lord of the household came forth from his chamber to meet the hero fitly. He spake to the knight, and said: "Ye are welcome to do here as it likes ye. All that is here is your own to have at your will and disposal."

"Gramercy!" quoth Gawain, "may Christ requite ye."

As friends that were fain each embraced the other; and Gawain looked on the knight who greeted him so kindly and thought 't was a bold warrior that owned that burg.

Of mighty stature he was, and of high age; broad and flowing was his beard, and of a bright hue. He was stalwart of limb, and strong in his stride, his face fiery red, and his speech free: in sooth he seemed one well fitted to be a leader of valiant men.

Then the lord led Sir Gawain to a chamber, and commanded folk to wait upon him, and at his bidding there came men enough who brought the guest to a fair bower. The bedding was noble, with curtains of pure silk wrought with gold, and wondrous coverings of fair cloth all embroidered. The curtains ran on ropes with rings of red gold, and the walls were hung with carpets of Orient, and the same spread on the floor. There with mirthful speeches they took from the guest his byrnie and all his shining armor, and brought him rich robes of the choicest in its stead. They were long and flowing, and became him well, and when he was clad in them all who looked on the hero thought that surely God had never made a fairer knight: he seemed as if he might be a prince without peer in the field where men strive in battle.

Then before the hearth-place, whereon the fire burned, they made ready a chair for Gawain, hung about with cloth and fair cushions; and there they cast around him a mantle of brown samite,[1] richly embroidered and furred within with costly skins of ermine, with a hood of the same, and he seated himself in that rich seat, and warmed himself at the fire, and was cheered at heart. And while he sat thus, the serving men set up a table on trestles, and covered it with a fair white cloth, and set thereon salt-cellar, and napkin, and silver spoons; and the knight washed at his will, and set him down to meat.

The folk served him courteously with many dishes seasoned of the best, a double portion. All kinds of fish were there, some baked in bread, some broiled on the embers, some sodden,[2] some stewed and

[1] rich cloth of silk (and gold)
[2] boiled

savored with spices, with all sorts of cunning devices to his taste. And often he called it a feast, when they spake gaily to him all together, and said, "Now take ye this penance, and it shall be for your amendment." Much mirth thereof did Sir Gawain make.

Then they questioned that prince courteously of whence he came; and he told them that he was of the court of Arthur, who is the rich royal king of the Round Table, and that it was Gawain himself who was within their walls, and would keep Christmas with them, as the chance had fallen out. And when the lord of the castle heard those tidings he laughed aloud for gladness, and all men in that keep were joyful that they should be in the company of him to whom belonged all fame, and valor, and courtesy, and whose honor was praised above that of all men on earth. Each said softly to his fellow, "Now shall we see courteous bearing, and the manner of speech befitting courts. What charm lieth in gentle speech shall we learn without asking, since here we have welcomed the fine father of courtesy. God has surely shown us his grace since he sends us such a guest as Gawain! When men shall sit and sing, blithe for Christ's birth, this knight shall bring us to the knowledge of fair manners, and it may be that hearing him we may learn the cunning speech of love."

By the time the knight had risen from dinner it was near nightfall. Then chaplains took their way to the chapel, and rang loudly, even as they should, for the solemn evensong of the high feast. Thither went the lord, and the lady also, and entered with her maidens into a comely closet, and thither also went Gawain. Then the lord took him by the sleeve and led him to a seat, and called him by his name, and told him he was of all men in the world the most welcome. And Sir Gawain thanked him truly, and each kissed the other, and they sat gravely together throughout the service.

Then was the lady fain to look upon that knight; and she came forth from her closet with many fair maidens. The fairest of ladies was she in face, and figure, and coloring, fairer even than Guinevere, so the knight thought. She came through the chancel to greet the hero; another lady held her by the left hand, older than she, and seemingly of high estate, with many nobles about her. But unlike to look upon were those ladies, for if the younger were fair, the elder was yellow. Rich red were the cheeks of the one, rough and wrinkled those of the other; the kerchiefs of the one were broidered with many glistening pearls, her throat and neck bare, and whiter than the snow that lies on the hills; the neck of the other was swathed in a gorget, with a white wimple over her black chin. Her forehead was wrapped in silk with many folds, worked with knots, so that naught of her was seen save her black brows, her eyes, her nose, and her lips, and those were bleared, and ill to look upon. A worshipful lady in sooth one might call her! In figure was she short and broad, and thickly made—far fairer to behold was she whom she led by the hand.

When Gawain beheld that fair lady, who looked at him graciously, with leave of the lord he went towards them, and, bowing low, he greeted the elder, but the younger and fairer he took lightly in his arms, and kissed her courteously, and greeted her in knightly wise. Then she hailed him as friend, and he quickly prayed to be counted as her servant, if she so willed. Then they took him between them, and talking, led him to the chamber, to the hearth, and bade them bring spices, and they brought them in plenty with the good wine that was wont to be drunk at such seasons. Then the

lord sprang to his feet and bade them make merry, and took off his hood, and hung it on a spear, and bade him win the worship thereof who should make most mirth that Christmas-tide. "And I shall try, by my faith, to fool it with the best, by the help of my friends, ere I lose my raiment." Thus with gay words the lord made trial to gladden Gawain with jests that night, till it was time to bid them light the tapers, and Sir Gawain took leave of them and gat him to rest.

In the morn when all men call to mind how Christ our Lord was born on earth to die for us, there is joy, for his sake, in all dwellings of the world; and so was there here on that day. For high feast was held, with many dainties and cunningly cooked messes. On the daïs sat gallant men, clad in their best. The ancient dame sat on the high seat, with the lord of the castle beside her. Gawain and the fair lady sat together, even in the midst of the board when the feast was served; and so throughout all the hall each sat in his degree, and was served in order. There was meat, there was mirth, there was much joy, so that to tell thereof would take me too long, though peradventure I might strive to declare it. But Gawain and that fair lady had much joy of each other's company through her sweet words and courteous converse. And there was music made before each prince, trumpets and drums, and merry pipings; each man hearkened his minstrel, and they too hearkened theirs.

So they held high feast that day and the next, and the third day thereafter, and the joy on Saint John's Day [1] was fair to hearken, for 't was the last of the feast and the guests would depart in the gray of the morning. Therefore they awoke early, and drank wine, and danced fair carols, and at last, when it was late, each man took his leave to wend early on his way. Gawain would bid his host farewell, but the lord took him by the hand, and led him to his own chamber beside the hearth, and there he thanked him for the favor he had shown him in honoring his dwelling at that high season, and gladdening his castle with his fair countenance. "I wis, sir, that while I live I shall be held the worthier that Gawain has been my guest at God's own feast."

"Gramercy, sir," quoth Gawain, "in good faith, all the honor is yours, may the High King give it you, and I am but at your will to work your behest, inasmuch as I am beholden to you in great and small by rights."

Then the lord did his best to persuade the knight to tarry with him, but Gawain answered that he might in no wise do so. Then the host asked him courteously what stern behest had driven him at the holy season from the king's court, to fare all alone, ere yet the feast was ended?

"Forsooth," quoth the knight, "ye say but the truth: 't is a high quest and a pressing that hath brought me afield, for I am summoned myself to a certain place, and I know not whither in the world I may wend to find it; so help me Christ, I would give all the kingdom of Logres an I might find it by New Year's morn. Therefore, sir, I make request of you that ye tell me truly if ye ever heard word of the Green Chapel, where it may be found, and the Green Knight that keeps it. For I am pledged by solemn compact sworn between us to meet that knight at the New Year if so I were on life; and of that same New Year it wants but little —I' faith, I would look on that hero more joyfully than on any other fair sight! Therefore, by your will, it behooves me to leave you, for I have but barely three days, and I would as fain fall dead as fail of mine errand."

Then the lord quoth, laughing, "Now

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must ye needs stay, for I will show you your goal, the Green Chapel, ere your term be at an end, have ye no fear! But ye can take your ease, friend, in your bed, till the fourth day, and go forth on the first of the year and come to that place at mid-morn to do as ye will. Dwell here till New Year's Day, and then rise and set forth, and ye shall be set in the way; 't is not two miles hence."

Then was Gawain glad, and he laughed gaily: "Now I thank you for this above all else. Now my quest is achieved I will dwell here at your will, and otherwise do as ye shall ask."

Then the lord took him, and set him beside him, and bade the ladies be fetched for their greater pleasure, tho' between themselves they had solace. The lord, for gladness, made merry jest, even as one who wist not what to do for joy; and he cried aloud to the knight, "Ye have promised to do the thing I bid ye: will ye hold to this behest, here, at once?"

"Yea, forsooth," said that true knight, "while I abide in your burg I am bound by your behest."

"Ye have traveled from far," said the host, "and since then ye have waked with me, ye are not well refreshed by rest and sleep, as I know. Ye shall therefore abide in your chamber, and lie at your ease to-morrow at Mass-tide, and go to meat when ye will with my wife, who shall sit with you, and comfort you with her company till I return; and I shall rise early and go forth to the chase." And Gawain agreed to all this courteously.

"Sir knight," quoth the host, "we will make a covenant. Whatsoever I win in the wood shall be yours, and whatever may fall to your share, that shall ye exchange for it. Let us swear, friend, to make this exchange, however our hap may be, for worse or for better."

"I grant ye your will," quoth Gawain the good; "if ye list so to do, it liketh me well."

"Bring hither the wine-cup, the bargain is made," so said the lord of that castle. They laughed each one, and drank of the wine, and made merry, these lords and ladies, as it pleased them. Then with gay talk and merry jest they arose, and stood, and spoke softly, and kissed courteously, and took leave of each other. With burning torches, and many a serving-man, was each led to his couch; yet ere they gat them to bed the old lord oft repeated their covenant, for he knew well how to make sport.

III

Full early, ere daylight, the folk rose up; the guests who would depart called their grooms, and they made them ready, and saddled the steeds, tightened up the girths, and trussed [1] up their mails. The knights, all arrayed for riding, leapt up lightly, and took their bridles, and each rode his way as pleased him best.

The lord of the land was not the last. Ready for the chase, with many of his men, he ate a sop hastily when he had heard Mass, and then with blast of the bugle fared forth to the field. He and his nobles were to horse ere daylight glimmered upon the earth.

Then the huntsmen coupled their hounds, unclosed the kennel door, and called them out. They blew three blasts gaily on the bugles, the hounds bayed fiercely, and they that would go a-hunting checked and chastised them. A hundred hunters there were of the best, so I have heard tell. Then the trackers gat them to the trysting-place and uncoupled the hounds, and the forest rang again with their gay blasts.

At the first sound of the hunt the game quaked for fear, and fled, trembling, along

[1] fastened. tightened

the vale. They betook them to the heights, but the liers in wait turned them back with loud cries; the harts they let pass them, and the stags with their spreading antlers, for the lord had forbidden that they should be slain, but the hinds and the does they turned back, and drave down into the valleys. Then might ye see much shooting of arrows. As the deer fled under the boughs a broad whistling shaft smote and wounded each sorely, so that, wounded and bleeding, they fell dying on the banks. The hounds followed swiftly on their tracks, and hunters, blowing the horn, sped after them with ringing shouts as if the cliffs burst asunder. What game escaped those that shot was run down at the outer ring. Thus were they driven on the hills, and harassed at the waters, so well did the men know their work, and the greyhounds were so great and swift that they ran them down as fast as the hunters could slay them. Thus the lord passed the day in mirth and joyfulness, even to nightfall.

So the lord roamed the woods, and Gawain, that good knight, lay ever a-bed, curtained about, under the costly coverlet, while the daylight gleamed on the walls. And as he lay half slumbering, he heard a little sound at the door, and he raised his head, and caught back a corner of the curtain, and waited to see what it might be. It was the lovely lady, the lord's wife; she shut the door softly behind her, and turned towards the bed; and Gawain was shamed, laid him down softly and made as if he slept. And she came lightly to the bedside, within the curtain, and sat herself down beside him, to wait till he wakened. The knight lay there awhile, and marveled within himself what her coming might betoken; and he said to himself, " 'T were more seemly if I asked her what hath brought her hither." Then he made feint to waken, and turned towards her, and opened his eyes as one astonished, and crossed himself; and she looked on him laughing, with her cheeks red and white, lovely to behold, and small smiling lips.

"Good morrow, Sir Gawain," said that fair lady; "ye are but a careless sleeper, since one can enter thus. Now are ye taken unawares, and lest ye escape me I shall bind you in your bed; of that be ye assured!" Laughing, she spake these words.

"Good morrow, fair lady," quoth Gawain blithely. "I will do your will, as it likes me well. For I yield me readily, and pray your grace, and that is best, by my faith, since I needs must do so." Thus he jested again, laughing. "But an ye would, fair lady, grant me this grace that ye pray your prisoner to rise. I would get me from bed, and array me better, then could I talk with ye in more comfort."

"Nay, forsooth, fair sir," quoth the lady, "ye shall not rise, I will rede[1] ye better. I shall keep ye here, since ye can do no other, and talk with my knight whom I have captured. For I know well that ye are Sir Gawain, whom all the world worships, wheresoever ye may ride. Your honor and your courtesy are praised by lords and ladies, by all who live. Now ye are here and we are alone, my lord and his men are afield; the serving men in their beds, and my maidens also, and the door shut upon us. And since in this hour I have him that all men love, I shall use my time well with speech, while it lasts. Ye are welcome to my company, for it behooves me in sooth to be your servant."

"In good faith," quoth Gawain, "I think me that I am not him of whom ye speak, for unworthy am I of such service as ye here proffer. In sooth, I were glad if I might set myself by word or service

[1] advise

to your pleasure; a pure joy would it be to me!"

"In good faith, Sir Gawain," quoth the gay lady, "the praise and the prowess that pleases all ladies I lack them not, nor hold them light; yet are there ladies enough who would liever now have the knight in their hold, as I have ye here, to dally with your courteous words, to bring them comfort and to ease their cares, than much of the treasure and the gold that are theirs. And now, through the grace of Him who upholds the heavens, I have wholly in my power that which they all desire!"

Thus the lady, fair to look upon, made him great cheer, and Sir Gawain, with modest words, answered her again: "Madam," he quoth, "may Mary requite ye, for in good faith I have found in ye a noble frankness. Much courtesy have other folk shown me, but the honor they have done me is naught to the worship of yourself, who knoweth but good."

"By Mary," quoth the lady, "I think otherwise; for were I worth all the women alive, and had I the wealth of the world in my hand, and might choose me a lord to my liking, then, for all that I have seen in ye, Sir Knight, of beauty and courtesy and blithe semblance, and for all that I have hearkened and hold for true, there should be no knight on earth to be chosen before ye."

"Well I wot," quoth Sir Gawain, "that ye have chosen a better; but I am proud that ye should so prize me, and as your servant do I hold ye my sovereign, and your knight am I, and may Christ reward ye."

So they talked of many matters till mid-morn was past, and ever the lady made as though she loved him, and the knight turned her speech aside. For though she were the brightest of maidens, yet had he forborne to shew her love for the danger that awaited him, and the blow that must be given without delay.

Then the lady prayed her leave from him, and he granted it readily. And she gave him good-day, with laughing glance, but he must needs marvel at her words:

"Now He that speeds fair speech reward ye this disport; but that ye be Gawain my mind misdoubts me greatly."

"Wherefore?" quoth the knight quickly, fearing lest he had lacked in some courtesy.

And the lady spake: "So true a knight as Gawain is holden, and one so perfect in courtesy, would never have tarried so long with a lady but he would of his courtesy have craved a kiss at parting."

Then quoth Gawain, "I wot I will do even as it may please ye, and kiss at your commandment, as a true knight should who forbears to ask for fear of displeasure."

At that she came near and bent down and kissed the knight, and each commended the other to Christ, and she went forth from the chamber softly.

Then Sir Gawain rose and called his chamberlain and chose his garments, and when he was ready he gat him forth to Mass, and then went to meat, and made merry all day till the rising of the moon, and never had a knight fairer lodging than had he with those two noble ladies, the elder and the younger.

And ever the lord of the land chased the hinds through holt and heath till eventide, and then with much blowing of bugles and baying of hounds they bore the game homeward; and by the time daylight was done all the folk had returned to that fair castle. And when the lord and Sir Gawain met together, then were they both well pleased. The lord commanded them all to assemble in the great hall, and the ladies to descend with their maidens, and there, before them all, he bade the men fetch in the

spoil of the day's hunting, and he called unto Gawain, and counted the tale of the beasts, and showed them unto him, and said, "What think ye of this game, Sir Knight? Have I deserved of ye thanks for my woodcraft?"

"Yea, I wis," quoth the other, "here is the fairest spoil I have seen this seven year in the winter season."

"And all this do I give ye, Gawain," quoth the host, "for by accord of covenant ye may claim it as your own."

"That is sooth," quoth the other, "I grant you that same; and I have fairly won this within walls, and with as good will do I yield it to ye." With that he clasped his hands round the lord's neck and kissed him as courteously as he might. "Take ye here my spoils, no more have I won; ye should have it freely, though it were greater than this."

"'T is good," said the host, "gramercy thereof. Yet were I fain to know where ye won this same favor, and if it were by your own wit?"

"Nay," answered Gawain, "that was not in the bond. Ask me no more: ye have taken what was yours by right, be content with that."

They laughed and jested together, and sat them down to supper, where they were served with many dainties; and after supper they sat by the hearth, and wine was served out to them; and oft in their jesting they promised to observe on the morrow the same covenant that they had made before, and whatever chance might betide, to exchange their spoil, be it much or little, when they met at night. Thus they renewed their bargain before the whole court, and then the night-drink was served, and each courteously took leave of the other and gat him to bed.

By the time the cock had crowed thrice the lord of the castle had left his bed; Mass was sung and meat fitly served. The folk were forth to the wood ere the day broke, with hound and horn they rode over the plain, and uncoupled their dogs among the thorns. Soon they struck on the scent, and the hunt cheered on the hounds who were first to seize it, urging them with shouts. The others hastened to the cry, forty at once, and there rose such a clamor from the pack that the rocks rang again. The huntsmen spurred them on with shouting and blasts of the horn; and the hounds drew together to a thicket betwixt the water and a high crag in the cliff beneath the hillside. There where the rough rock fell ruggedly they, the hunstmen, fared to the finding, and cast about round the hill and the thicket behind them. The knights wist well what beast was within, and would drive him forth with the bloodhounds. And as they beat the bushes, suddenly over the beaters there rushed forth a wondrous great and fierce boar, long since had he left the herd to roam by himself. Grunting, he cast many to the ground, and fled forth at his best speed, without more mischief. The men hallooed loudly and cried, "Hay! Hay!" and blew the horns to urge on the hounds, and rode swiftly after the boar. Many a time did he turn to bay and tare the hounds, and they yelped, and howled shrilly. Then the men made ready their arrows and shot at him, but the points were turned on his thick hide, and the barbs would not bite upon him, for the shafts shivered in pieces, and the head but leapt again wherever it hit.

But when the boar felt the stroke of the arrows he waxed mad with rage, and turned on the hunters and tare many, so that, affrightened, they fled before him. But the lord on a swift steed pursued him, blowing his bugle; as a gallant knight he rode through the woodland chasing the boar till the sun grew low.

So did the hunters this day, while Sir Gawain lay in his bed lapped in rich

gear; and the lady forgat not to salute him, for early was she at his side, to cheer his mood.

She came to the bedside and looked on the knight, and Gawain gave her fit greeting, and she greeted him again with ready words, and sat her by his side and laughed, and with a sweet look she spoke to him:

"Sir, if ye be Gawain, I think it a wonder that ye be so stern and cold, and care not for the courtesies of friendship, but if one teach ye to know them ye cast the lesson out of your mind. Ye have soon forgotten what I taught ye yesterday, by all the truest tokens that I knew!"

"What is that?" quoth the knight. "I trow I know not. If it be sooth that ye say, then is the blame mine own."

"But I taught ye of kissing," quoth the fair lady. "Whenever a fair countenance is shown him, it behooves a courteous knight quickly to claim a kiss."

"Nay, my dear," said Sir Gawain, "cease that speech; that durst I not do lest I were denied, for if I were forbidden I wot I were wrong did I further entreat."

"I' faith," quoth the lady merrily, "ye may not be forbid, ye are strong enough to constrain by strength an ye will, were any so discourteous as to give ye denial."

"Yea, by heaven," said Gawain, "ye speak well; but threats profit little in the land where I dwell, and so with a gift that is given not of good will! I am at your commandment to kiss when ye like, to take or to leave as ye list."

Then the lady bent her down and kissed him courteously.

And as they spake together she said, "I would learn somewhat from ye, an ye would not be wroth, for young ye are and fair, and so courteous and knightly as ye are known to be, the head of all chivalry, and versed in all wisdom of love and war—'t is ever told of true knights how they adventured their lives for their true love, and endured hardships for her favors, and avenged her with valor, and eased her sorrows, and brought joy to her bower; and ye are the fairest knight of your time, and your fame and your honor are everywhere, yet I have sat by ye here twice, and never a word have I heard of love! Ye who are so courteous and skilled in such love ought surely to teach one so young and unskilled some little craft of true love! Why are ye so unlearned who art otherwise so famous? Or is it that ye deemed me unworthy to hearken to your teaching? For shame, Sir Knight! I come hither alone and sit at your side to learn of ye some skill; teach me of your wit, while my lord is from home."

"In good faith," quoth Gawain, "great is my joy and my profit that so fair a lady as ye are should deign to come hither, and trouble ye with so poor a man, and make sport with your knight with kindly countenance, it pleaseth me much. But that I, in my turn, should take it upon me to tell of love and such like matters to ye who know more by half, or a hundred fold, of such craft than I do, or ever shall in all my lifetime, by my troth 't were folly indeed! I will work your will to the best of my might as I am bounden, and evermore will I be your servant, so help me Christ!"

Then often with guile she questioned that knight that she might win him to woo her, but he defended himself so fairly that none might in any wise blame him, and naught but bliss and harmless jesting was there between them. They laughed and talked together till at last she kissed him, and craved her leave of him, and went her way.

Then the knight arose and went forth to Mass, and afterward dinner was served and he sat and spake with the ladies all

day. But the lord of the castle rode ever over the land chasing the wild boar, that fled through the thickets, slaying the best of his hounds and breaking their backs in sunder; till at last he was so weary he might run no longer, but made for a hole in a mound by a rock. He got the mound at his back and faced the hounds, whetting his white tusks and foaming at the mouth. The huntsmen stood aloof, fearing to draw nigh him; so many of them had been already wounded that they were loath to be torn with his tusks, so fierce he was and mad with rage. At length the lord himself came up, and saw the beast at bay, and the men standing aloof. Then quickly he sprang to the ground and drew out a bright blade, and waded through the stream to the boar.

When the beast was aware of the knight with weapon in hand, he set up his bristles and snorted loudly, and many feared for their lord lest he should be slain. Then the boar leapt upon the knight so that beast and man were one atop of the other in the water; but the boar had the worst of it, for the man had marked, even as he sprang, and set the point of his brand to the beast's chest, and drove it up to the hilt, so that the heart was split in twain, and the boar fell snarling, and was swept down by the water to where a hundred hounds seized on him, and the men drew him to shore for the dogs to slay.

Then was there loud blowing of horns and baying of hounds, the huntsmen smote off the boar's head, and hung the carcass by the four feet to a stout pole, and so went on their way homewards. The head they bore before the lord himself, who had slain the beast at the ford by force of his strong hand.

It seemed him o'er long ere he saw Sir Gawain in the hall, and he called, and the guest came to take that which fell to his share. And when he saw Gawain the lord laughed aloud, and bade them call the ladies and the household together, and he showed them the game, and told them the tale, how they hunted the wild boar through the woods, and of his length and breadth and height; and Sir Gawain commended his deeds and praised him for his valor, well proven, for so mighty a beast had he never seen before.

Then they handled the huge head, and the lord said aloud, "Now, Gawain, this game is your own by sure covenant, as ye right well know."

" 'T is sooth," quoth the knight, "and as truly will I give ye all I have gained." He took the host round the neck, and kissed him courteously twice. "Now are we quits," he said, "this eventide, of all the covenants that we made since I came hither."

And the lord answered, "By Saint Giles, ye are the best I know; ye will be rich in a short space if ye drive such bargains!"

Then they set up the tables on trestles, and covered them with fair cloths, and lit waxen tapers on the walls. The knights sat and were served in the hall and much game and glee was there round the hearth, with many songs, both at supper and after; song of Christmas, and new carols, with all the mirth one may think of. And ever that lovely lady sat by the knight, and with still stolen looks made such feint of pleasing him, that Gawain marveled much, and was wroth with himself, but he could not for his courtesy return her fair glances, but dealt with her cunningly, however she might strive to wrest the thing.

When they had tarried in the hall so long as it seemed them good, they turned to the inner chamber and the wide hearth-place, and there they drank wine, and the host proffered to renew the covenant for New Year's Eve; but the knight craved leave to depart on the morrow, for it was

nigh to the term when he must fulfil his pledge. But the lord would withhold him from so doing, and prayed him to tarry, and said,

"As I am a true knight I swear my troth that ye shall come to the Green Chapel to achieve your task on New Year's morn, long before prime.[1] Therefore abide ye in your bed, and I will hunt in this wood, and hold ye to the covenant to exchange with me against all the spoil I may bring hither. For twice have I tried ye, and found ye true, and the morrow shall be the third time and the best. Make we merry now while we may, and think on joy, for misfortune may take a man whensoever it wills."

Then Gawain granted his request, and they brought them drink, and they gat them with lights to bed.

Sir Gawain lay and slept softly, but the lord, who was keen on woodcraft, was afoot early. After Mass he and his men ate a morsel, and he asked for his steed; all the knights who should ride with him were already mounted before the hall gates.

'T was a fair frosty morning, for the sun rose red in ruddy vapor, and the welkin was clear of clouds. The hunters scattered them by a forest side, and the rocks rang again with the blast of their horns. Some came on the scent of a fox, and a hound gave tongue; the hunstmen shouted, and the pack followed in a crowd on the trail. The fox ran before them, and when they saw him they pursued him with noise and much shouting, and he wound and turned through many a thick grove, often cowering and hearkening in a hedge. At last by a little ditch he leapt out of a spinney,[2] stole away slily by a copse path, and so out of the wood and away from the hounds. But he went, ere he wist, to a chosen tryst, and three started forth on him at once, so he must needs double back, and betake him to the wood again.

Then was it joyful to hearken to the hounds; when all the pack had met together and had sight of their game they made as loud a din as if all the lofty cliffs had fallen clattering together. The huntsmen shouted and threatened, and followed close upon him so that he might scarce escape, but Reynard was wily, and he turned and doubled upon them, and led the lord and his men over the hills, now on the slopes, now in the vales, while the knight at home slept through the cold morning beneath his costly curtains.

But the fair lady of the castle rose betimes, and clad herself in a rich mantle that reached even to the ground, left her throat and her fair neck bare, and was bordered and lined with costly furs. On her head she wore no golden circlet, but a network of precious stones, that gleamed and shone through her tresses in clusters of twenty together. Thus she came into the chamber, closed the door after her, and set open a window, and called to him gaily, "Sir Knight, how may ye sleep? The morning is so fair."

Sir Gawain was deep in slumber, and in his dream he vexed him much for the destiny that should befall him on the morrow, when he should meet the knight at the Green Chapel, and abide his blow; but when the lady spake he heard her, and came to himself, and roused from his dream and answered swiftly. The lady came laughing, and kissed him courteously, and he welcomed her fittingly with a cheerful countenance. He saw her so glorious and gaily dressed, so faultless of features and complexion, that it warmed his heart to look upon her.

They spake to each other smiling, and all was bliss and good cheer between them. They exchanged fair words, and much happiness was therein, yet was

[1] six o'clock [2] grove

there a gulf between them, and she might win no more of her knight, for that gallant prince watched well his words—he would neither take her love, nor frankly refuse it. He cared for his courtesy, lest he be deemed churlish, and yet more for his honor lest he be traitor to his host. "God forbid," quoth he to himself, "that it should so befall." Thus with courteous words did he set aside all the special speeches that came from her lips.

Then spake the lady to the knight, "Ye deserve blame if ye hold not that lady who sits beside ye above all else in the world, if ye have not already a love whom ye hold dearer, and like better, and have sworn such firm faith to that lady that ye care not to loose it—and that am I now fain to believe. And now I pray ye straitly that ye tell me that in truth, and hide it not."

And the knight answered, "By Saint John" (and he smiled as he spake) "no such love have I, nor do I think to have yet awhile."

"That is the worst word I may hear," quoth the lady, "but in sooth I have mine answer; kiss me now courteously, and I will go hence; I can but mourn as a maiden that loves much."

Sighing, she stooped down and kissed him, and then she rose up and spake as she stood, "Now, dear, at our parting do me this grace: give me some gift, if it were but thy glove, that I may bethink me of my knight, and lessen my mourning."

"Now, I wis," quoth the knight, "I would that I had here the most precious thing that I possess on earth that I might leave ye as love-token, great or small, for ye have deserved forsooth more reward than I might give ye. But it is not to your honor to have at this time a glove for reward as gift from Gawain, and I am here on a strange errand, and have no man with me, nor mails with goodly things—that mislikes me much, lady, at this time; but each man must fare as he is taken, if for sorrow and ill."

"Nay, knight highly honored," quoth that lovesome lady, "though I have naught of yours, yet shall ye have somewhat of mine." With that she reached him a ring of red gold with a sparkling stone therein, that shone even as the sun (wit ye well, it was worth many marks); but the knight refused it, and spake readily,

"I will take no gift, lady, at this time. I have none to give, and none will I take."

She prayed him to take it, but he refused her prayer, and sware in sooth that he would not have it.

The lady was sorely vexed, and said, "If ye refuse my ring as too costly, that ye will not be so highly beholden to me, I will give you my girdle as a lesser gift." With that she loosened a lace that was fastened at her side, knit upon her kirtle under her mantle. It was wrought of green silk, and gold, only braided by the fingers, and that she offered to the knight, and besought him though it were of little worth that he would take it, and he said nay, he would touch neither gold nor gear ere God give him grace to achieve the adventure for which he had come hither. "And therefore, I pray ye, displease ye not, and ask me no longer, for I may not grant it. I am dearly beholden to ye for the favor ye have shown me, and ever, in heat and cold, will I be your true servant."

"Now," said the lady, "ye refuse this silk, for it is simple in itself, and so it seems, indeed; lo, it is small to look upon and less in cost, but whoso knew the virtue that is knit therein he would, peradventure, value it more highly. For whatever knight is girded with this green lace, while he bears it knotted about him

there is no man under heaven can overcome him, for he may not be slain for any magic on earth."

Then Gawain bethought him, and it came into his heart that this were a jewel for the jeopardy that awaited him when he came to the Green Chapel to seek the return blow—could he so order it that he should escape unslain, 't were a craft worth trying. Then he bare with her chiding, and let her say her say, and she pressed the girdle on him and prayed him to take it, and he granted her prayer, and she gave it him with good will, and besought him for her sake never to reveal it but to hide it loyally from her lord; and the knight agreed that never should any man know it, save they two alone. He thanked her often and heartily, and she kissed him for the third time.

Then she took her leave of him, and when she was gone Sir Gawain arose, and clad him in rich attire, and took the girdle, and knotted it round him, and hid it beneath his robes. Then he took his way to the chapel, and sought out a priest privily and prayed him to teach him better how his soul might be saved when he should go hence; and there he shrived him, and showed his misdeeds, both great and small, and besought mercy and craved absolution; and the priest assoiled[1] him, and set him as clean as if doomsday had been on the morrow. And afterwards Sir Gawain made him merry with the ladies, with carols, and all kinds of joy, as never he did but that one day, even to nightfall; and all the men marveled at him, and said that never since he came thither had he been so merry.

Meanwhile the lord of the castle was abroad chasing the fox; awhile he lost him, and as he rode through a spinney he heard the hounds near at hand, and Reynard came creeping through a thick grove, with all the pack at his heels. Then the lord drew out his shining brand, and cast it at the beast, and the fox swerved aside for the sharp edge, and would have doubled back, but a hound was on him ere he might turn, and right before the horse's feet they all fell on him, and worried him fiercely, snarling the while.

Then the lord leapt from his saddle, and caught the fox from the jaws, and held it aloft over his head, and hallooed loudly, and many brave hounds bayed as they beheld it; and the hunters hied them thither, blowing their horns; all that bare bugles blew them at once, and all the others shouted. 'T was the merriest meeting that ever men heard, the clamor that was raised at the death of the fox. They rewarded the hounds, stroking them and rubbing their heads, and took Reynard and stripped him of his coat; then blowing their horns, they turned them homewards, for it was nigh nightfall.

The lord was gladsome at his return, and found a bright fire on the hearth, and the knight beside it, the good Sir Gawain, who was in joyous mood for the pleasure he had had with the ladies. He wore a robe of blue, that reached even to the ground, and a surcoat richly furred, that became him well. A hood like to the surcoat fell on his shoulders, and all alike were done about with fur. He met the host in the midst of the floor, and jesting, he greeted him, and said, "Now shall I be first to fulfil our covenant which we made together when there was no lack of wine." Then he embraced the knight, and kissed him thrice, as solemnly as he might.

"Of a sooth," quoth the other, "ye have good luck in the matter of this covenant, if ye made a good exchange."

"Yea, it matters naught of the exchange," quoth Gawain, "since what I owe is swiftly paid."

[1] absolved

"Marry," said the other, "mine is behind, for I have hunted all this day, and naught have I got but this foul fox-skin, and that is but poor payment for three such kisses as ye have here given me."

"Enough," quoth Sir Gawain, "I thank ye, by the Rood."

Then the lord told them of his hunting, and how the fox had been slain.

With mirth and minstrelsy, and dainties at their will, they made them as merry as a folk well might till 't was time for them to sever, for at last they must needs betake them to their beds. Then the knight took his leave of the lord, and thanked him fairly.

"For the fair sojourn that I have had here at this high feast may the High King give ye honor. I give ye myself, as one of your servants, if ye so like; for I must needs, as you know, go hence with the morn, and ye will give me, as ye promised, a guide to show me the way to the Green Chapel, an God will suffer me on New Year's Day to deal the doom of my weird." [1]

"By my faith," quoth the host, "all that ever I promised, that shall I keep with good will." Then he gave him a servant to set him in the way, and lead him by the downs, that he should have no need to ford the stream, and should fare by the shortest road through the groves; and Gawain thanked the lord for the honor done him. Then he would take leave of the ladies, and courteously he kissed them, and spake, praying them to receive his thanks, and they made like reply; then with many sighs they commended him to Christ, and he departed courteously from that folk. Each man that he met he thanked him for his service and his solace, and the pains he had been at to do his will; and each found it as hard to part from the knight as if he had ever dwelt with him.

Then they led him with torches to his chamber, and brought him to his bed to rest. That he slept soundly I may not say, for the morrow gave him much to think on. Let him rest awhile, for he was near that which he sought, and if ye will but listen to me I will tell ye how it fared with him thereafter.

IV

Now the New Year drew nigh, and the night passed, and the day chased the darkness, as is God's will; but wild weather wakened therewith. The clouds cast the cold to the earth, with enough of the north to slay them that lacked clothing. The snow drave smartly, and the whistling wind blew from the heights, and made great drifts in the valleys. The knight, lying in his bed, listened, for though his eyes were shut, he might sleep but little, and hearkened every cock that crew.

He arose ere the day broke, by the light of a lamp that burned in his chamber, and called to his chamberlain, bidding him bring his armor and saddle his steed. The other gat him up, and fetched his garments, and robed Sir Gawain.

First he clad him in his clothes to keep off the cold, and then in his harness, which was well and fairly kept. Both hauberk and plates were well burnished, the rings of the rich byrnie freed from rust, and all as fresh as at first, so that the knight was fain to thank them. Then he did on each piece, and bade them bring his steed, while he put the fairest raiment on himself; his coat with its fair cognizance,[2] adorned with precious stones upon velvet, with broidered seams, and all furred within with costly skins. And he left not the lace, the lady's gift, that Gawain

[1] to receive the judgment of my fate

[2] coat of arms, distinguishing mark

forgot not, for his own good. When he had girded on his sword he wrapped the gift twice about him, swathed around his waist. The girdle of green silk set gaily and well upon the royal red cloth, rich to behold, but the knight ware it not for pride of the pendants, polished though they were with fair gold that gleamed brightly on the ends, but to save himself from sword and knife, when it behooved him to abide his hurt without question. With that the hero went forth, and thanked that kindly folk full often.

Then was Gringalet ready, that was great and strong, and had been well cared for and tended in every wise; in fair condition was that proud steed, and fit for a journey. Then Gawain went to him, and looked on his coat, and said by his sooth, "There is a folk in this place that thinketh on honor; much joy may they have, and the lord who maintains them, and may all good betide that lovely lady all her life long. Since they for charity cherish a guest, and hold honor in their hands, may he who holds the heaven on high requite them, and also ye all. And if I might live anywhile on earth, I would give ye full reward, readily, if so I might." Then he set foot in the stirrup and bestrode his steed, and his squire gave him his shield, which he laid on his shoulder. Then he smote Gringalet with his golden spurs, and the steed pranced on the stones and would stand no longer.

By that his man was mounted, who bare his spear and lance, and Gawain quoth, "I commend this castle to Christ, may he give it ever good fortune." Then the drawbridge was let down, and the broad gates unbarred and opened on both sides; the knight crossed himself, and passed through the gateway, and praised the porter, who knelt before the prince, and gave him good-day, and commended him to God. Thus the knight went on his way with the one man who should guide him to that dread place where he should receive rueful payment.

The two went by hedges where the boughs were bare, and climbed the cliffs where the cold clings. Naught fell from the heavens, but 't was ill beneath them; mist brooded over the moor and hung on the mountains; each hill had a cap, a great cloak, of mist. The streams foamed and bubbled between their banks, dashing sparkling on the shores where they shelved downwards. Rugged and dangerous was the way through the woods, till it was time for the sun-rising. Then were they on a high hill; the snow lay white beside them, and the man who rode with Gawain drew rein by his master.

"Sir," he said, "I have brought ye hither, and now ye are not far from the place that ye have sought so specially. But I will tell ye for sooth, since I know ye well, and ye are such a knight as I well love, would ye follow my counsel ye would fare the better. The place whither ye go is accounted full perilous, for he who liveth in that waste is the worst on earth, for he is strong and fierce, and loveth to deal mighty blows; taller he is than any man on earth, and greater of frame than any four in Arthur's court, or in any other. And this is his custom at the Green Chapel; there may no man pass by that place, however proud his arms, but he does him to death by force of his hand, for he is a discourteous knight, and shews no mercy. Be he churl or chaplain who rides by that chapel, monk or mass-priest, or any man else, he thinks it as pleasant to slay them as to pass alive himself. Therefore, I tell ye, as sooth as ye sit in saddle, if ye come there and that knight know it, ye shall be slain, though ye had twenty lives; trow me that truly! He has dwelt here full long and seen many a combat; ye may not defend ye against his blows. Therefore, good Sir Gawain,

let the man be, and get ye away some other road; for God's sake seek ye another land, and there may Christ speed ye! And I will hie me home again, and I promise ye further that I will swear by God and the saints, or any other oath ye please, that I will keep counsel faithfully, and never let any wit the tale that ye fled for fear of any man."

"Gramercy," quoth Gawain, but ill-pleased. "Good fortune be his who wishes me good, and that thou wouldst keep faith with me I will believe; but didst thou keep it never so truly, an I passed here and fled for fear as thou sayest, then were I a coward knight, and might not be held guiltless. So I will to the chapel let chance what may, and talk with that man, even as I may list, whether for weal or for woe as fate may have it. Fierce though he may be in fight, yet God knoweth well how to save his servants."

"Well," quoth the other, "now that ye have said so much that ye will take your own harm on yourself, and ye be pleased to lose your life, I will neither let [1] nor keep ye. Have here your helm and the spear in your hand, and ride down this same road beside the rock till ye come to the bottom of the valley, and there look a little to the left hand, and ye shall see in that vale the chapel, and the grim man who keeps it. Now fare ye well, noble Gawain; for all the gold on earth I would not go with ye nor bear ye fellowship one step further." With that the man turned his bridle into the wood, smote the horse with his spurs as hard as he could, and galloped off, leaving the knight alone.

Quoth Gawain, "I will neither greet [2] nor groan, but commend myself to God, and yield me to his will."

Then the knight spurred Gringalet, and rode adown the path close in by a bank beside a grove. So he rode through the rough thicket, right into the dale, and there he halted, for it seemed him wild enough. No sign of a chapel could he see, but high and burnt banks on either side and rough rugged crags with great stones above. An ill-looking place he thought it.

Then he drew in his horse and looked round to seek the chapel, but he saw none and thought it strange. Then he saw as it were a mound on a level space of land by a bank beside the stream where it ran swiftly; the water bubbled within as if boiling. The knight turned his steed to the mound, and lighted down and tied the rein to the branch of a linden; and he turned to the mound and walked round it, questioning with himself what it might be. It had a hole at the end and at either side, and was overgrown with clumps of grass, and it was hollow within as an old cave or the crevice of a crag; he knew not what it might be.

"Ah," quoth Gawain, "can this be the Green Chapel? Here might the devil say his matins at midnight! Now I wis there is wizardry here. 'T is an ugly oratory, all overgrown with grass, and 't would well beseem that fellow in green to say his devotions on devil's wise. Now feel I in five wits, 't is the foul fiend himself who hath set me this tryst, to destroy me here! This is a chapel of mischance: ill-luck betide it, 't is the cursedest kirk [3] that ever I came in!"

Helmet on head and lance in hand, he came up to the rough dwelling, when he heard over the high hill beyond the brook, as it were in a bank, a wondrous fierce noise, that rang in the cliff as if it would cleave asunder. 'T was as if one ground a scythe on a grindstone, it whirred and whetted like water on a mill-wheel and rushed and rang, terrible to hear.

[1] hinder [2] weep [3] church

"By God," quoth Gawain, "I trow that gear is preparing for the knight who will meet me here. Alas! naught may help me, yet should my life be forfeit, I fear not a jot!" With that he called aloud. "Who waiteth in this place to give me tryst. Now is Gawain come hither: if any man will aught of him let him hasten hither now or never."

"Stay," quoth one on the bank above his head, "and ye shall speedily have that which I promised ye." Yet for a while the noise of whetting went on ere he appeared, and then he came forth from a cave in the crag with a fell weapon, a Danish ax newly dight, wherewith to deal the blow. An evil head it had, four feet large, no less, sharply ground, and bound to the handle by the lace that gleamed brightly. And the knight himself was all green as before, face and foot, locks and beard, but now he was afoot. When he came to the water he would not wade it, but sprang over with the pole of his ax, and strode boldly over the bent[1] that was white with snow.

Sir Gawain went to meet him, but he made no low bow. The other said, "Now, fair sir, one may trust thee to keep tryst. Thou art welcome, Gawain, to my place. Thou hast timed thy coming as befits a true man. Thou knowest the covenant set between us: at this time twelve months agone thou didst take that which fell to thee, and I at this New Year will readily requite thee. We are in this valley, verily alone, here are no knights to sever us, do what we will. Have off thy helm from thine head, and have here thy pay; make me no more talking than I did then when thou didst strike off my head with one blow."

"Nay," quoth Gawain, "by God that gave me life, I shall make no moan whatever befall me, but make thou ready for the blow and I shall stand still and say never a word to thee, do as thou wilt."

With that he bent his head and showed his neck all bare, and made as if he had no fear, for he would not be thought adread.

Then the Green Knight made him ready, and grasped his grim weapon to smite Gawain. With all his force he bore it aloft with a mighty feint of slaying him: had it fallen as straight as he aimed he who was ever doughty of deed had been slain by the blow. But Gawain swerved aside as the ax came gliding down to slay him as he stood, and shrank a little with the shoulders, for the sharp iron. The other heaved up the blade and rebuked the prince with many proud words:

"Thou art not Gawain," he said, "who is held so valiant, that never feared he man by hill or vale, but *thou* shrinkest for fear ere thou feelest hurt. Such cowardice did I never hear of Gawain! Neither did *I* flinch from thy blow, or make strife in King Arthur's hall. My head fell to my feet, and yet I fled not; but thou didst wax faint of heart ere any harm befell. Wherefore must I be deemed the braver knight."

Quoth Gawain, "I shrank once, but so will I no more; though an *my* head fall on the stones I cannot replace it. But haste, Sir Knight, by thy faith, and bring me to the point, deal me my destiny, and do it out of hand, for I will stand thee a stroke and move no more till thine ax have hit me — my troth on it."

"Have at thee, then," quoth the other, and heaved aloft the ax with fierce mien, as if he were mad. He struck at him fiercely but wounded him not, withholding his hand ere it might strike him.

Gawain abode the stroke, and flinched in no limb, but stood still as a stone or the stump of a tree that is fast rooted in the rocky ground with a hundred roots.

[1] open field, heath

Then spake gaily the man in green, "So now thou hast thine heart whole it behooves me to smite. Hold aside thy hood that Arthur gave thee, and keep thy neck thus bent lest it cover it again."

Then Gawain said angrily, "Why talk on thus? Thou dost threaten too long. I hope thy heart misgives thee."

"For sooth," quoth the other, "so fiercely thou speakest I will no longer let thine errand wait its reward." Then he braced himself to strike, frowning with lips and brow, 't was no marvel that it pleased but ill him who hoped for no rescue. He lifted the ax lightly and let it fall with the edge of the blade on the bare neck. Though he struck swiftly, it hurt him no more than on the one side where it severed the skin. The sharp blade cut into the flesh so that the blood ran over his shoulder to the ground. And when the knight saw the blood staining the snow, he sprang forth, swift-foot, more than a spear's length, seized his helmet and set it on his head, cast his shield over his shoulder, drew out his bright sword, and spake boldly (never since he was born was he half so blithe), "Stop, Sir Knight, bid[1] me no more blows. I have stood a stroke here without flinching, and if thou give me another, I shall requite thee, and give thee as good again. By the covenant made betwixt us in Arthur's hall but one blow falls to me here. Halt, therefore."

Then the Green Knight drew off from him and leaned on his ax, setting the shaft on the ground, and looked on Gawain as he stood all armed and faced him fearlessly — at heart it pleased him well. Then he spake merrily in a loud voice, and said to the knight, "Bold sir, be not so fierce; no man here hath done thee wrong, nor will do, save by covenant, as we made at Arthur's court. I promised thee a blow and thou hast it — hold thyself well paid! I release thee of all other claims. If I had been so minded I might perchance have given thee a rougher buffet. First I menaced thee with a feigned one, and hurt thee not for the covenant that we made in the first night, and which thou didst hold truly. All the gain didst thou give me as a true man should. The other feint I proffered thee for the morrow: my fair wife kissed thee, and thou didst give me her kisses — for both those days I gave thee two blows without scathe — true man, true return. But the third time thou didst fail, and therefore hadst thou that blow. For 't is *my* weed thou wearest, that same woven girdle, my own wife wrought it, that do I wot for sooth. Now know I well thy kisses, and thy conversation, and the wooing of my wife, for 't was mine own doing. I sent her to try thee, and in sooth I think thou art the most faultless knight that ever trod earth. As a pearl among white peas is of more worth than they, so is Gawain, i' faith, by other knights. But thou didst lack a little, Sir Knight, and wast wanting in loyalty, yet that was for no evil work, nor for wooing neither, but because thou lovedst thy life — therefore I blame thee the less."

Then the other stood a great while, still sorely angered and vexed within himself; all the blood flew to his face, and he shrank for shame as the Green Knight spake; and the first words he said were, "Cursed be ye, cowardice and covetousness, for in ye is the destruction of virtue." Then he loosed the girdle, and gave it to the knight. "Lo, take there the falsity, may foul befall it! For fear of thy blow cowardice bade me make friends with covetousness and forsake the customs of largess and loyalty, which befit all knights. Now am I faulty and false and have been afeared: from treachery and untruth come sorrow and care. I avow to thee, Sir Knight, that I

[1] offer

have ill done; do then thy will. I shall be more wary hereafter."

Then the other laughed and said gaily, "I wot I am whole of the hurt I had, and thou hast made such free confession of thy misdeeds, and hast so borne the penance of mine ax edge, that I hold thee absolved from that sin, and purged as clean as if thou hadst never sinned since thou wast born. And this girdle that is wrought with gold and green, like my raiment, do I give thee, Sir Gawain, that thou mayest think upon this chance when thou goest forth among princes of renown, and keep this for a token of the adventure of the Green Chapel, as it chanced between chivalrous knights. And thou shalt come again with me to my dwelling and pass the rest of this feast in gladness." Then the lord laid hold of him, and said, "I wot we shall soon make peace with my wife, who was thy bitter enemy."

"Nay, forsooth," said Sir Gawain, and seized his helmet and took it off swiftly, and thanked the knight: "I have fared ill, may bliss betide thee, and may he who rules all things reward thee swiftly. Commend me to that courteous lady, thy fair wife, and to the other my honored ladies, who have beguiled their knight with skilful craft. But 't is no marvel if one be made a fool and brought to sorrow by women's wiles, for so was Adam beguiled by one, and Solomon by many, and Samson all too soon, for Delilah dealt him his doom; and David thereafter was wedded with Bathsheba, which brought him much sorrow — if one might love a woman and believe her not, 't were great gain! And since all they were beguiled by women, methinks 't is the less blame to me that I was misled! But as for thy girdle, that will I take with good will, not for gain of the gold, nor for samite, nor silk, nor the costly pendants, neither for weal nor for worship, but in sign of my frailty. I shall look upon it when I ride in renown and remind myself of the fault and faintness of the flesh; and so when pride uplifts me for prowess of arms, the sight of this lace shall humble my heart. But one thing would I pray, if it displease thee not: since thou art lord of yonder land wherein I have dwelt, tell me what thy rightful name may be and I will ask no more."

"That will I truly," quoth the other. "Bernlak de Hautdesert am I called in this land. Morgain le Fay dwelleth in mine house, and through knowledge of clerkly craft hath she taken many. For long time was she the mistress of Merlin, who knew well all you knights of the court. Morgain the goddess is she called therefore, and there is none so haughty but she can bring him low. She sent me in this guise to yon fair hall to test the truth of the renown that is spread abroad of the valor of the Round Table. She taught me this marvel to betray your wits, to vex Guinevere and fright her to death by the man who spake with his head in his hand at the high table. That is she who is at home, that ancient lady, she is even thine aunt, Arthur's half-sister, the daughter of the Duchess of Tintagel, who afterward married King Uther. Therefore I bid thee, knight, come to thine aunt, and make merry in thine house; my folk love thee, and I wish thee as well as any man on earth, by my faith, for thy true dealing."

But Sir Gawain said nay, he would in no wise do so; so they embraced and kissed, and commended each other to the Prince of Paradise, and parted right there, on the cold ground. Gawain on his steed rode swiftly to the king's hall, and the Green Knight got him whithersoever he would.

Sir Gawain, who had thus won grace of his life, rode through wild ways on Gringalet; oft he lodged in a house, and oft without, and many adventures did he

have and came off victor full often, as at this time I cannot relate in tale. The hurt that he had in his neck was healed, he bare the shining girdle as a baldric bound by his side, and made fast with a knot 'neath his left arm, in token that he was taken in a fault — and thus he came in safety again to the court.

Then joy awakened in that dwelling when the king knew that the good Sir Gawain was come, for he deemed it gain. King Arthur kissed the knight, and the queen also, and many valiant knights sought to embrace him. They asked him how he had fared, and he told them all that had chanced to him — the adventure of the chapel, the fashion of the knight, the love of the lady — at last of the lace. He showed them the wound in the neck which he won for his disloyalty at the hand of the knight; the blood flew to his face for shame as he told the tale.

"Lo, lady," he quoth, and handled the lace, "this is the bond of the blame that I bear in my neck, this is the harm and the loss I have suffered, the cowardice and covetousness in which I was caught, the token of my covenant in which I was taken. And I must needs wear it so long as I live, for none may hide his harm, but undone it may not be, for if it hath clung to thee once, it may never be severed."

Then the king comforted the knight, and the court laughed loudly at the tale, and all made accord that the lords and the ladies who belonged to the Round Table, each hero among them, should wear bound about him a baldric of bright green for the sake of Sir Gawain. And to this was agreed all the honor of the Round Table, and he who ware it was honored the more thereafter, as it is testified in the best book of romance. That in Arthur's days this adventure befell, the book of Brutus bears witness. For since that bold knight came hither first, and the siege and the assault were ceased at Troy, I wis

Many a venture herebefore
Hath fallen such as this:
May He that bare the crown of thorn
Bring us unto His bliss.
Amen.

Honi soit qui mal y pense.

THE MEDIEVAL TALE: GEOFFREY CHAUCER

THE brief narrative, about the length of our short story, although lacking its peculiar character, was very popular in the middle ages and the renaissance. Sometimes it was written in prose, sometimes in verse; not infrequently collections of such narratives were gathered together into a single book, as we gather together volumes of short stories. When this was done, an attempt was often made to give the collection greater unity by fitting the various stories into a framework. Boccaccio, in Italy, assembled a hundred *novelle* (*The Decameron*) under the pretext that ten people, shut up in a castle on account of the plague, each told a story a day for ten days to pass the time. Chaucer, planning a similar collection, conceived the idea of accompanying a group of pilgrims traveling from London to Canterbury, who, to make the journey more agreeable, plan to tell certain stories going and coming. The result, as he reported them, is *The Canterbury Tales*.

Chaucer's device has one great advantage over Boccaccio's. It permitted him to assemble a much more varied group of people, from widely separated social classes, to tell the tales. And before letting them tell their stories he has described them in a General Prologue. This prologue is a wonderful portrait gallery of individuals who are at the same time representative of the various classes of medieval society. It is printed in the following pages.

The tales which make up Chaucer's collection illustrate many types of medieval literature. There is the romance, the Breton *lai*, the fabliau, the miracle of the Virgin, the beast fable, the burlesque romance, and many others. The two included in the present volume are the entertaining story of the cock and the fox, as told by the Nun's Priest, and the masterly story of the knight and the loathly lady, told by the Wife of Bath. Both are Chaucer at his best.

The facts of Chaucer's life (1340-1400) need be but briefly referred to here. Son of a London wine merchant, he became successively page, soldier, esquire of the king's household, comptroller of customs, diplomat, and was an active man of affairs generally. His other poems include *Troilus and Criseyde* (a novel in verse), *The House of Fame*, *The Legend of Good Women*, and numerous minor pieces.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340–1400)

THE CANTERBURY TALES

THE PROLOGUE

Here bygynneth the Book of the tales of Caunterbury.

WHAN that Aprille with hise shoures soote [1]
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye,[10]
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages [2]):
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes,[3] kowthe [4] in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunturbury they wende.[5]
The hooly blisful martir [6] for to seke,
That hem [7] hath holpen, whan that they were seeke.

Bifil that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard [8] as I lay [9]
Redy to wenden on my pilgrymage [21]
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At nyght were come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a compaignye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felaweshipe, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte [10] beste. [29]
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everychon,[11]
That I was of hir felaweshipe anon,
And made forward [12] erly for to ryse,
To take oure wey, ther as I yow devyse.

But nathelees, whil I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thynketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they were, and of what degree; [40]
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knyght than wol I first bigynne.

A KNYGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To riden out, he loved chivalrie,[13]
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden no man ferre [14]
As wel in cristendom as in hethenesse, [49]
And evere honoured for his worthynesse.

At Alisaundre [15] he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne [16]
Aboven alle nacions in Pruce.[17]
In Lettow [18] hadde he reysed [19] and in Ruce,[20]
No cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade [21] at the seege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir,[22] and riden in Belmarye.[23]
At Lyeys [24] was he, and at Satalye,[25]

[1] showers sweet feelings
[2] distant shrines (*lit.* saints)
[3] known
[4] go
[5] Thomas à Becket
[6] them
[7] An inn in Southwark, a district of London south of Thames.
[8] lodged
[10] at the
[11] every one (*lit.* ever each one)
[12] agreement
[13] knighthood
[14] farther
[15] Alexandria, captured 1365
[16] had sat at the head of the table, perhaps of the "Teutonic Order" in Prussia.
[17] Prussia
[18] Lithuania
[19] made a military expedition
[20] Russia
[21] Granada
[22] Algeciras, captured from Moorish King of Granada in 1344.
[23] Moorish kingdom in Africa (also Tramesene, below).
[24] In Armenia, won from Turks c. 1367.
[25] Now Adalia, in Asia Minor, taken c. 1353.

Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See [1]
At many a noble aryve [2] hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for oure feith at Tramyssene
In lystes thries, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knyght hadde been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,[3]
Agayn another hethen in Turkye:
And everemoore he hadde a sovereyn prys.[4]
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meeke as is a mayde.
He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde
In al his lyf, unto no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knyght.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors weren goode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian [5] he wered a gypon [6]
Al bismotered with his habergeoun.[7]
For he was late y-come from his viage,[8]
And wente for to doon his pilgrymage.
With hym ther was his sone, a yong SQUIER,
A lovyere,[9] and a lusty bacheler,[10]
With lokkes crulle,[11] as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly delyvere,[12] and of greet strengthe.
And he hadde been somtyme in chyvachie,[13]
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Pycardie,
And born hym weel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a meede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede.
Syngynge he was, or floytynge,[14] al the day;
He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.
Short was his gowne, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel koude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He koude songes make and wel endite,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye [15] and write.
So hoote he lovede, that by nyghtertale [16]
He slepte namoore than dooth a nyghtyngale.
Curteis he was, lowely, and servysable,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.
A YEMEN [17] hadde he, and servantz namo
At that tyme, for hym liste [18] ride so;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok arwes bright and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,—
Wel koude he dresse his take [19] yemanly:
Hise arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe
And in his hand he baar a myghty bowe.
A not-heed [20] hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of woodecraft wel koude he al the usage
Upon his arm he baar a gay bracer,[21]
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
And on that oother syde a gay daggere,
Harneised [22] wel, and sharpe as point of spere;
A Cristophere [23] on his brest of silver sheene.
An horn he bar, the bawdryk was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.
Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smylyng was ful symple and coy;[24]

[1] Mediterranean
[2] disembarkation (the reading is doubtful)
[3] Palathia, in Anatolia
[4] highest renown
[5] cotton fabric
[6] doublet
[7] coat of mail
[8] journey
[9] lover
[10] young aspirant to knighthood
[11] curled
[12] active, agile
[13] military expedition
[14] whistling, or playing the flute
[15] draw
[16] night-time
[17] yeoman, a servant above the rank of groom
[18] it pleased him
[19] arrow
[20] close-cropped head
[21] leather shield for arm, to prevent friction of bow-string
[22] ornamented
[23] A figure of St. Christopher, worn like a brooch, and as a charm.
[24] quiet

Hire gretteste ooth was but by seint Loy; [1]
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she soong the service dyvyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semeely;
And Frenssh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,[2]
For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fyngres in hir sauce depe.
Wel koude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fille upon hire brist.
In curteisie was set ful muchel hir list,
Hire over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthyng [3] sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,[4]
And sikerly [5] she was of greet desport,[6]
And ful plesaunt, and amyable of port,
And peyned hire to countrefete cheere [7]
Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne [8] of reverence.
But, for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe, if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flessh, or milk and wastel breed.[9]
But soore wepte she if any of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte: [10]
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semyly hir wympul [11] pynched [12] was;
Hire nose tretys; [13] hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed.
It was almoost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetys [14] was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal coral aboute hire arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene; [15]
And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful sheene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*
Another NONNE with hire hadde she,
That was hire chapeleyne, and Preestes thre.
A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistrie,
An out-ridere,[16] that lovede venerie;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee [17] hors hadde he in stable:
And, whan he rood, men myghte his brydel heere
Gynglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere,
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel belle,
Ther as this lord was kepere of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure [18] or of seint Beneit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,[19]
This ilke [20] monk leet olde thynges pace,
And heeld after the newe world the space [21]
He yaf nat of that text [22] a pulled hen,

[1] Saint Eligius, who refused to swear.
[2] A convent, where presumably she was educated. It did not have the same aristocratic affiliations as the nunnery at Barking.
[3] small spot
[4] reached
[5] certainly
[6] pleasantry
[7] behavior
[8] worthy
[9] The best grade of bread in general use.
[10] smartly with a stick
[11] neck-piece
[12] pleated
[13] long and slender
[14] neat, handsome
[15] Every eleventh bead (*gaudee*) stood for a Paternoster and was, in her string, green.
[16] An officer in a monastery whose duty it was to look after the manor belonging to it.
[17] valuable
[18] St. Muir (542) was a disciple of St. Benedict.
[19] somewhat strict
[20] same
[21] course
[22] *Genesis*, x, 9.

That seith that hunters beth nat hooly men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
Is likned til a fissh that is waterlees;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloystre.
But thilke text heeld he nat worth an oystre.
And I seyde his opinion was good.
What[1] sholde he studie, and make hymselven wood,
Upon a book in cloystre alwey to poure,
Or swynken[2] with his handes, and laboure,
As Austyn[3] bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austyn have his swynk to him reserved.
Therfore he was a prikasour[4] aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swift as fowel in flight;
Of prikyng and of huntyng for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh[5] his sleves y-purfiled[6] at the hond
With grys,[7] and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chyn,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a ful curious pyn:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as it hadde been anoynt.
He was a lord ful fat and in good poynt;[8]
Hise eyen stepe,[9] and rollynge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;[10]
His bootes souple, his hors in greet estaat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelaat;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned[11] goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.

His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.
A FRERE ther was, a wantowne and a merye,
A lymytour[12] a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that kan
So muchel of daliaunce[13] and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owene cost.
Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns[14] over-al in his contree,
And [eek] with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he hadde power of confessioun,
As seyde hymself, moore than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.[15]
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to yeve[16] penaunce
Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shryve.
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,[17]
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so harde is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh hym soore smerte.
Therfore, in stede of wepynge and preyeres,
Men moote yeve silver to the povre freres.
His typet[18] was ay farsed[19] ful of knyves
And pynnes, for to yeven yonge wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a murye note;
Wel koude he synge and pleyen on a rote.[20]
Of yeddynges[21] he baar outrely the pris.
His nekke whit was as the flour-de-lys.
Ther-to he strong was as a champion.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;

[1] why
[2] work
[3] (St.) Augustine bids
[4] hard rider
[5] saw
[6] edged with fur
[7] fine gray fur
[8] condition
[9] bright
[10] That shone like a fire under a cauldron
[11] wasted away
[12] begging friar, assigned a district or limit
[13] gossip, small talk
[14] well-to-do farmer
[15] licensed by Pope to hear confession everywhere
[16] give
[17] boast
[18] loose hood, used as pocket
[19] stuffed
[20] harp-like musical instrument
[21] songs

For unto swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with sike lazars aqueyntaunce.
It is nat honeste,[1] it may nat avaunce
For to deelen with no swich poraille,[2]
But al with riche and selleres of vitaille.
And over-al,[3] ther as profit sholde arise,
Curteis he was, and lowely of servyse.
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.[4]
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
[And yaf a certeyn ferm[5] for the graunt;
Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;]
For thogh a wydwe hadde noght a sho,
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,[6]
Yet wolde he have a ferthyng, er he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.[7]
And rage he koude as it were right a whelpe.[8]
In love-dayes[9] ther koude he muchel helpe.
For there he was nat lyk a cloystrer,
With a thredbare cope, as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worstede was his semy-cope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.[10]
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,[11]
To make his Englissh sweete upon his tonge;
And in his harpyng, whan that he hadde songe,
Hise eyen twynkled in his heed aryght,
As doon the sterres in the frosty nyght.
This worthy lymytour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
In motlee, and hye on horse he sat,
Upon his heed a Flaundryssh bevere hat;
His bootes clasped faire and fetisly.
Hise resons he spak ful solempnely,
Sownynge[12] alway thencrees of his wynnyng.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.[13]
Wel koude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.[14]
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;[15]
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevyssaunce.[16]
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men hym calle.

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That unto logyk hadde longe y-go.
As leene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
But looked holwe, and ther-to sobrely.
Ful thredbare was his overeste courtepy;[17]
For he hadde geten hym yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office.[18]
For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twenty bookes, clad in blak or reed
Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrie.[19]
But al be that he was a philosophre,[20]
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he myghte of his freendes hente[21]
On bookes and on lernynge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye

[1] becoming
[2] poor people
[3] everywhere
[4] capable
[5] annual payment
[6] *John*, I. 1-14, used by Friars as a favorite devotion upon entering a house.
[7] The proceeds of his begging were considerably greater than his other income.
[8] puppy dog
[9] Days fixed for arbitration of disputes out of court.
[10] mould
[11] as an affectation
[12] conducing to
[13] Middleborough, a well-known port in the Netherlands; Orowell, a river in Suffolk. This line has an important bearing on the date of the Prologue. The wool staple was at Middleborough only from 1384 to 1388, as pointed out by Hales.
[14] deal in foreign exchange
[15] used
[16] borrowing and lending money
[17] short cloak of coarse material
[18] secular (often legal) employment
[19] psaltery (mus. instr.)
[20] The word is also used for alchemists; hence allusion in next line.
[21] get

Of hem that yaf hym wher-with to scoleye.[1]
Of studie took he moost cure and moost heede.
Noght o word spak he moore than was neede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,[2]
And short and quyk, and ful of hy sentence.
Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war[3] and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,[4]
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, hise wordes weren so wise,
Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour[5] was nowher noon.
Al was fee symple to hym in effect,
His purchasyng myghte nat been infect.[6]
Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes[7] hadde he caas and doomes alle,
That from the tyme of kyng William were y-falle.
Therto he koude endite, and make a thyng,[8]
Ther koude no wight pynchen[9] at his writyng;
And every statut koude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint[10] of silk, with barres[11] smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

[1] attend school, study
[2] propriety and respect
[3] wary
[4] church porch (of St. Paul's in London, a meeting place for lawyers)
[5] conveyancer
[6] invalid
[7] year books, *i.e.* digests of cases and decisions (caas and doomes)
[8] draw up legal papers
[9] find fault
[10] girdle
[11] stripes

A FRANKELEYN was in his compaignye;
Whit was his berd, as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sope in wyn,[12]
To lyven in delit was evere his wone,
For he was Epicurus owene sone,
That heeld opinioun that pleyn delit
Was verraily felicitee parfyt.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian[13] he was in his contree.
His breed, his ale, was alweys after oon;[14]
A bettre envyned man was nevere noon.
With-oute bake-mete[15] was nevere his hous,
Of fissh and flessh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke,
Of alle deyntees that men koude thynke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,[16]
And many a breem[17] and many a luce[18] in stewe.
Wo was his cook, but-if[19] his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharpe, and redy al his geere.[20]
His table dormant[21] in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns[22] ther was he lord and sire.
Ful ofte tyme he was knyght of the shire.
An anlaas[23] and a gipser[24] al of silk
Heeng at his girdel, whit as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and [a] countour;[25]
Was nowher such a worthy vavasour.[26]

An HABERDASSHERE[27] and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE,[28] a DYERE, and a TAPYCER,[29]

[12] pieces of bread or cake dipped in wine
[13] St. Julian was famous for providing fine accommodations.
[14] of one standard
[15] pastry, a pie
[16] coop
[17] a kind of fish
[18] pike (fish)
[19] unless
[20] knives, etc.
[21] a (permanent) side table on which food was constantly kept.
[22] meetings of justices of peace
[23] dagger
[24] pouch
[25] accountant (in his capacity as sheriff)
[26] a middle-class landowner
[27] sellers of hats, sometimes of notions
[28] weaver
[29] upholsterer

And they were clothed alle in o lyveree,
Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.
Ful fressh and newe hir geere apiked was;[1]
Hir knyves were chaped[2] noght with bras,
But al with silver wroght ful clene and weel,
Hire girdles and hir pouches everydeel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldehalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he kan,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel[3] hadde they ynogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certeyn were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been y-cleped *ma dame*,
And goon to vigilies[4] al bifore,
And have a mantel roialliche y-bore.

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones,[5]
And poudre-marchant tart,[6] and galyngale.[7]
Wel koude he knowe a draughte of Londoun ale.
He koude rooste, and sethe, and b[r]oille, and frye,
Maken mortreux,[8] and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shyne a mormal[9] hadde he;
For blankmanger,[10] that made he with the beste.

A Shipman was ther, wonynge[11] fer by weste
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood upon a rouncy,[12] as he kouthe,
In a gowne of faldyng[13] to the knee.
A daggere hangynge on a laas[14] hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hoote somer hadde maad his hewe al broun;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whil that the chapman[15] sleepe
Of nyce conscience took he no keepe.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers hym bisides,[16]
His herberwe and his moone, his lodemenage,[17]
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew [wel] alle the havenes, as they were.
From Gootland to the Cape of Fynystere,
And every cryke[18] in Britaigne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped[19] was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisik,
In al this world ne was ther noon hym lik
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.
He kepte his pacient a ful greet deel
In houres, by his magyk natureel.
Wel koude he fortunen the ascendent
Of hise ymages[20] for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moyste, or drye,
And where engendred, and of what humour;
He was a verray parfit praktisour.

[1] apparel was furbished
[2] capped
[3] property and income
[4] gatherings in church on the eve of a festival
[5] marrow
[6] a sharp flavoring powder
[7] a spice
[8] thick soups
[9] a running sore
[10] white hash, made of capon, rice, etc.
[11] dwelling
[12] horse, riding horse
[13] coarse cloth
[14] lace, cord
[15] merchant who owned it
[16] ever near at hand
[17] piloting
[18] harbor
[19] named
[20] By astrology he could select a favorable time for his treatment.

The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the roote,
Anon he yaf the sike man his boote.[1]
Ful redy hadde he hise apothecaries,
To sende him drogges, and his letuaries,[2]
For ech of hem made oother for to wynne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to bigynne.
Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,[3]
And Deyscorides, and eek Rufus;
Olde Ypocras, Haly, and Galyen;
Serapion, Razis, and Avycen;
Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissyng and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwyn [4] and in pers [5] he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal; [6]
And yet he was but esy of dispence; [7]
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

A good WIF was ther of biside BATHE,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.[8]
Of clooth-makyng she hadde swiche an haunt,[9]
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.[10]
In al the parisshe wif ne was ther noon
That to the offrynge bifore hire sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs [11] ful fyne weren of ground; [12]
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday weren upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite [13] y-teyd, and shoes ful moyste [14] and newe.
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten [15] oother compaignye in youthe;
But therof nedeth nat to speke as nowthe.[16]
And thries hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge strem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at Seint Jame,[17] and at Coloigne.
She koude muchel of wandrynge by the weye.
Gat-tothed [18] was she, soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wympled [19] wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe; [20]
A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hire feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel koude she laughe and carpe.[21]
Of remedies of love she knew per-chaunce,
For she koude of that art the olde daunce.

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSOUN [22] of a toun;
But riche he was of hooly thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benygne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sithes.[23]
Ful looth were hym to cursen [24] for hise tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Unto his povre parisshens aboute
Of his offryng, and eek of his substaunce.
He koude in litel thyng have suffisaunce.

[1] remedy
[2] electuaries, medicines mixed with a syrup
[3] The men here mentioned were the authors of the chief medical books of the middle ages.
[4] blood-red cloth
[5] bluish grey
[6] a rich thin silk
[7] modest in expenditure
[8] misfortune
[9] skill
[10] Ghent
[11] covering for the head
[12] texture
[13] tightly
[14] soft
[15] besides
[16] at present
[17] The celebrated shrine of St. James of Compostella in Galicia.
[18] with teeth far apart
[19] See line 151.
[20] shield
[21] talk
[22] parson
[23] proved ofttimes
[24] excommunicate

Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief to visite
The ferreste [1] in his parisshe, muche and lite,
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheepe he yaf,
That firste he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
And this figure he added eek ther-to,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren doo?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed [2] man to ruste;
And shame it is, if [that] a prest take keepe,
A [fouled] shepherde and a clene sheepe.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yeve,
By his clennesse, how that his sheepe sholde lyve.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to Londoun, unto Seint Poules,
To seken hym a chauntrie for soules,[3]
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;[4]
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat myscarie;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he hooly were, and vertuous,
He was nat to synful man despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,[5]
But in his techyng discreet and benygne.
To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lough estat,
Hym wolde he snybben [6] sharply for the nonys.[7]
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon ys.

He waited after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spiced [8] conscience,
But Cristes loore, and hise apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it hymselve.
With hym ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,[9]
A trewe swynkere and a good was he,
Lyvynge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hoole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,[10]
And thanne his neighebore right as hymselve.
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,[11]
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hire, if it lay in his myght.
Hise tithes payde he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swynk and his catel.
In a tabard [12] he rood upon a mere.
Ther was also a Reve [13] and a Millere,
A Somnour [14] and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple,[15] and my-self; ther were namo.
The MILLERE was a stout carl,[16] for the nones,
Ful byg he was of brawn, and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastlynge he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,[17]
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,[18]
Or breke it, at a rennyng, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,

[1] farthest
[2] unlearned
[3] He did not turn his duties over to a substitute while he sought an endowed position (chantry priest) at St. Paul's in London.
[4] kept in retirement
[5] haughty nor over-dignified
[6] reprimand
[7] on the occasion
[8] too scrupulous
[9] cartload
[10] was pleasant or unpleasant
[11] make ditches and dig
[12] coarse outer garment
[13] An overseer of an estate.
[14] An officer who summoned people to appear in (ecclesiastical) court.
[15] An officer of a college or an inn of court, as here (see below), who purchased the provisions.
[16] fellow
[17] knotty fellow
[18] off its hinges

And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cope [1] right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a toft of herys,
Reed as the brustles of a sowes erys;
Hise nosethirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
He was a janglere [2] and a goliardeys,[3]
And that was moost of synne and harlotries.
Wel koude he stelen corn, and tollen thries; [4]
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold,[5] pardee.
A whit cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepipe wel koude he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.
A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,[6]
Of which achatours [7] myghte take exemple
For to be wise in byyinge of vitaille.
For wheither that he payde, or took by taille,[8]
Algate [9] he wayted [10] so in his achaat,[11]
That he was ay biforn and in good staat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thries ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious;
Of whiche ther weren a duszeyne in that hous,
Worthy to been stywardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To maken hym [12] lyve by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but if he were wood,[13]
Or lyve as scarsly as hym list desire;

[1] top
[2] loud talker
[3] ribald jester
[4] take three times his due
[5] An expression applied to millers (often satirically) because they felt the meal as it came from the mill.
[6] an inn of court or law school
[7] purchasers
[8] tally, credit kept on a notched stick
[9] always
[10] watched his opportunity
[11] purchase
[12] *i.e.*, the lord
[13] mad

And able for to helpen al a shire
In any caas that myghte falle or happe;
And yet this manciple sette hir aller cappe.[14]

The REVE was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he kan.
His heer was by his erys round y-shorn.
His tope was doked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel koude he kepe a gerner and a bynne;
Ther was noon auditour koude on him wynne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn
The yeldynge of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes sheepe, his neet,[15] his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor,[16] and his pultrye,
Was hooly in this reves governyng,
And by his covenant yaf the rekenyng,
Syn that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther koude no man brynge hym in arrerage.
Ther nas baillif, ne hierde, nor oother hyne,[17]
That he [ne] knew his sleighte [18] and his covyne; [19]
They were adrad of hym, as of the deeth.[20]
His wonyng was ful faire upon an heeth,
With grene trees shadwed was his place.
He koude bettre than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was astored pryvely,
His lord wel koude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene [21] hym of his owene good,
And have a thank, [and] yet a gowne and hood.
In youthe he hadde lerned a good myster;[22]
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat upon a ful good stot,[23]

[14] cheated them all
[15] cattle
[16] stock
[17] hind, farm laborer
[18] cunning
[19] deceit
[20] pestilence
[21] lend
[22] craft, trade
[23] a horse

That was al pomely[1] grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers[2] upon he hade,
And by his syde he baar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Biside a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked[3] he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And evere he rood the hyndreste of oure route.
A Somonour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubynnes face,
For sawcefleem[4] he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous as a sparwe,
With scaled[5] browes blake, and piled[6] berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quyk-silver, lytarge, ne brymstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That hym myghte helpen of the whelkes[7] white,
Nor of the knobbes sittynge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drynken strong wyn, reed as blood.
Thanne wolde he speke, and crie as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Kan clepen "Watte," as well as kan the pope.
But who-so koude in oother thyng hym grope,[8]

[1] dappled
[2] Cf. line 439.
[3] *i.e.*, by means of a girdle
[4] having a red, pimpled face
[5] scabby
[6] deprived of hair
[7] pimples
[8] test

Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophie;
Ay *"Questio quid iuris"*[9] wolde he crie.
He was a gentil harlot[10] and a kynde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght fynde.
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf-monthe, and excuse hym atte fulle:
And prively a fynch eek koude he pulle.[11]
And if he foond owher a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have noon awe,
In swich caas, of the ercedekenes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punysshed be.
"Purs is the ercedekenes helle," seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursyng oghte ech gilty man [him] drede—
For curs wol slee right as assoillyng[12] savith—
And also war him of a *significavit*.[13]
In daunger[14] hadde he at his owene gise[15]
The yonge girles[16] of the diocise,
And knewhir consell, and was al hir reed.[17]
A gerland[18] hadde he set upon his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;[19]
A bokeleer hadde he maad him of a cake.
With hym ther was a gentil Pardoner
Of Rouncivale,[20] his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he soong, "Com hider, love, to me."[21]
This somonour bar to hym a stif burdoun,[22]
Was nevere trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,

[9] The question is, what law is there on the subject.
[10] fellow
[11] *i.e.*, fleece a person
[12] absolution
[13] first word in writ of excommunication
[14] within his jurisdiction
[15] in his own way
[16] young people of either sex
[17] advice
[18] three hoops at right angles, decorated with ribbons; here only one hoop.
[19] pole projecting from ale house on which "garland" was hung.
[20] hospital in London
[21] a popular song
[22] sang the bass

But smothe it heeng, as dooth a strike[1] of flex;
By ounces[2] henge hise lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he hise shuldres over-spradde;
But thynne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for Jolitte, [ne] wered he noon,
For it was trussed[3] up in his walet
Hym thoughte, he rood al of the newe jet;[4]
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glarynge eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernycle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet [lay] biforn hym in his lappe,
Bret-ful[5] of pardoun comen from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne nevere sholde have,
As smoothe it was as it were late y-shave;
I trowe he were a geldyng or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwyk into Ware.[6]
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male[7] he hadde a pilwe-beer,[8]
Which that, he seyde, was oure lady veyl:
He seyde, he hadde a gobet[9] of the seyl
That Seint Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Upon the see, til Jhesu Crist hym hente.[10]
He hadde a croys of latoun,[11] ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person dwellynge, upon lond,[12]
Upon a day he gat hym moore moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus with feyned flaterye and Japes,[13]
He made the person and the peple his apes.

[1] hank
[2] in strands (cf. colpons, line 679)
[3] packed
[4] fashion
[5] brim-full
[6] *i.e.*, from north to south of England
[7] bag
[8] pillow-case
[9] small pieces
[10] caught hold of
[11] a metal made of copper and zinc
[12] in the country
[13] deceits

But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel koude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest[14] he song an offertorie;
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affile[15] his tonge,
To wynne silver, as he ful wel koude;
Therefore he song so murierly and loude.
Now have I toold you shortly, in a clause,
Thestaat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this compaignye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.[16]
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke nyght,
Whan we were in that hostelrie alyght.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of oure pilgrimage.
But first I pray yow of youre curteisye,
That ye narette[17] it nat my vileynye,[18]
Thogh that I pleynyly speke in this mateere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir cheere;[19]
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.
For this ye knowen al-so[20] wel as I,
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moote reherce, as ny as evere he kan,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al[21] speke he never so rudeliche or large;[22]
Or ellis he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thyng, or fynde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak hym-self ful brode in hooly writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileynye is it.
Eek Plato seith, who-so kan hym rede,
The wordes moote be cosyn to the dede.

[14] best of all
[15] file, smoothe down
[16] a tavern
[17] ascribe not
[18] ill breeding
[19] appearance
[20] as
[21] although
[22] freely

Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Heere in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chiere made oure hoost us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drynke us leste.
A semely man oure hooste was with-alle
For to been a marchal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys was ther noon in Chepe: [1]
Boold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a myrie man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of myrthe amonges othere thynges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekenynges;
And seyde thus: "Now, lordynges, trewely
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I saugh nat this yeer so myrie a compaignye
At ones in this herberwe [2] as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow myrthe, wiste [3] I how.
And of a myrthe I am right now bythoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow speede,
The blisful martir quite yow youre meede.[4]
And wel I woot,[5] as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen [6] yow to talen [7] and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne myrthe is noon
To ride by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow liketh alle, by oon assent,
For to stonden at my juggement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye riden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But-if ye be myrie, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hoold up youre hond, withouten moore speche."
Oure conseil was not longe for to seche.
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,[8]
And graunted hym with-outen moore avys,
And bad him seye his voirdit, as hym leste.
"Lordynges," quod he, "now herkneth for the beste;
But taak it nought, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorte with oure weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And homward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whilom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth hym best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this caas
Tales of best sentence [9] and moost solaas,
Shal have a soper at oure aller [10] cost
Heere in this place sittynge by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the moore mury,
I wol my-self gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owene cost, and be youre gyde.
And who-so wole my juggement withseye [11]

[1] Cheapside, in London
[2] inn
[3] knew
[4] duly reward you
[5] know
[6] intend
[7] to tell tales
[8] It seemed to us not a matter for deliberation.
[9] wisdom
[10] of us all
[11] contradict

Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me therfore."
This thyng was graunted, and oure othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden hym also
That he would vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been oure governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn pris;
And we wol[d] reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lough; and thus, by oon assent,
We been accorded to his juggement.
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet[1] anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon.
With-outen any lenger taryynge.
A-morwe, whan that day gan for to sprynge,
Up roos oure hoost, and was oure aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel moore than paas,[2]
Unto the wateryng of Seint Thomas.[3]
And there oure hoost bigan his hors areste,
And seyde; "Lordynges, herkneth if yow leste.
Ye woot youre foreward,[4] and [I] it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song accorde,
Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale
As evere mote I drynke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my juggement
Shal paye for al that by the wey is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twynne;
He which that hath the shorteste shal bigynne."
"Sire knyght," quod he, "my mayster and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn accord.
Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady prioresse;
And ye, sire clerk, lat be your shamefastnesse,
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man."
Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort,[5] or cas,[6]
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knyght,
Of which ful blithe and glad was every wyght;
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By foreward and by composicioun,
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this goode man saugh it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe his foreward by his free assent,
He seyde: "Syn I shal bigynne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."
And with that word we ryden forth oure weye;
And he bigan with right a myrie cheere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

[*Heere endith the prolog of this book . . .*]

THE NUN'S PRIEST'S TALE

Heere bigynneth the Nonnes Preestes tale of the Cok and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote

A poure wydwe somdel stape[7] in age,
Was whilom dwellyng in a narwe cotage,
Beside a greve, stondynge in a dale.
This wydwe of which I telle yow my tale,
Syn thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful symple lyf,

[1] fetched
[2] foot-pace
[3] St. Thomas a Watering, where pilgrims were accustomed to water their horses.
[4] Cf. line 33.
[5] destiny
[6] accident
[7] advanced

For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
By housbondrie of swich as God hire sente,
She foond hirself, and eek hire doghtren two.
Thre large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three keen and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hire bour, and eek hire halle,
In which she eet ful many a sklendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte,
Hir diete was accordant to hir cote.
Repleccioun ne made hire nevere sik;
Attempree diete was al hir phisik,
And exercise, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette [1] hire nothyng for to daunce,
Napoplexie shente nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whit ne reed;
Hir bord was served moost with whit and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she foond no lak,
Seynd [2] bacoun, and somtyme an ey [3] or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner deye.[4]
A yeerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dych withoute,
In which she hadde a cok, heet Chauntecleer,
In al the land of crowyng nas his peer.
His voys was murier than the murie orgon
On messedayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer was his crowyng in his logge,
Than is a clokke, or an abbey orlogge.[5]
By nature he knew eche ascensioun
Of the equynoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene weren ascended,

[1] hindered
[2] singed
[3] egg
[4] servant
[5] clock

Thanne crew he, that it myghte nat been amended.
His coomb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailled, as it were a castel wal.
His byle was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;
Lyk asure were hise legges, and his toon; [6]
Hise nayles whiter than the lylye flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
Whiche were hise sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hyrself so faire,
Syn thilke day that she was seven nyght oold,
That trewely she hath the herte in hoold
Of Chauntecleer loken in ever lith;[7]
He loved hire so, that wel was hym therwith.
But swiche a joye was it to here hem synge,
Whan that the brighte sonne bigan to sprynge,
In sweete accord, "My lief is faren in londe," [8]
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Beestes and briddes koude speke and synge.
And so bifel, that in the dawenynge,
As Chauntecleer among hise wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next hym sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,

[6] toes
[7] limb
[8] A current song, preserved in Trinity College Camb. MS. R. 3. 19, where it was found by Professor Skeat.

As man that in his dreem is drecched[1] soore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde hym roore,
She was agast, and seyde, "O herte deere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!"[71]
And he answerede and seyde thus, "Madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat agrief:
By God, me mette[2] I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is soore afright.
Now God," quod he, "my swevene[3] recche[4] aright,
And kepe my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yeerd, wheer as I saugh a beest,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areest[80]
Upon my body, and han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelow and reed;
And tipped was his tayl, and bothe hise eeris
With blak, unlyk the remenant of hise heeris;
His snowte smal, with glowynge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for feere almoost I deye;
This caused me my gronyng, doutelees."
"Avoy!" quod she, "fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!" quod she, "for, by that God above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;[90]
I kan nat love a coward, by my feith.
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desiren, if it myghte bee,
To han housbondes hardy, wise, and free,
And secree, and no nygard, ne no fool,
Ne hym that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour,[5] by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto youre love,
That any thyng myghte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?[100]
Allas! and konne ye been agast of swevenys?
Nothyng, God woot, but vanitee, in swevene is.
Swevenes engendren of repleccioun,
And ofte of fume,[6] and of compleccioun,
Whan humours been to habundant in a wight,
Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-nyght,
Cometh of [the] greet superfluytee
Of youre rede colera, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fyre with rede lemes,[7][110]
Of grete beestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contekes,[8] and of whelpes grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolie
Causeth ful many a man, in sleepe, to crie,
For feere of blake beres, or boles blake,
Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours koude I telle also,
That werken many a man in sleepe ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I kan.
Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man,[120]
Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of[9] dremes?
Now, sire," quod she, "whan we flee fro the bemes,[10]
For Goddes love, as taak som laxatyf;
Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I conseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere, and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye shal nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apothecarie,

[1] troubled
[2] I dreamed
[3] dream
[4] regard
[5] boaster
[6] flames
[7] gases from stomach, the result of gluttony and drunkenness.
[8] strifes
[9] take no account of
[10] *i.e.*, of the house

I shal myself to herbes techen yow,
That shul been for youre hele, and for youre prow; [1]
And in oure yeerd tho herbes shall I fynde,
The whiche han of hire propretee, by kynde,[2]
To purge yow bynethe, and eek above.
Foryet nat this, for Goddes owene love!
Ye been ful coleryk of complecciouns.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hoote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take youre laxatyves,
Of lawriol, centaure, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of katapuce, or of gaitrys beryis,
Of herbe yve, growyng in oure yeerd, ther mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem yn.
Be myrie, housbonde, for youre fader kyn!
Dredeth no dreem; I kan sey yow namoore."
"Madame," quod he, "graunt mercy [3] of youre loore.
But nathelees, as touchyng Daun Catoun,
That hath of wysdom swich a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bookes rede
Of many a man, moore of auctorite
Than evere Caton was, so moot I thee,[4]
That al the revers seyn of this sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes been significaciouns,
As wel of joye as of tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lif present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preeve sheweth it in dede.
Oon of the gretteste auctour[s] that men rede
Seith thus, that whilom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, they coomen in a toun,
Wheras ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage,
In which they bothe myghte logged bee.
Wherfore they mosten, of necessitee,
As for that nyght, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem gooth to his hostelrye,
And took his loggyng as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yeerd, with oxen of the plough;
That oother man was logged wel ynough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
And so bifel, that, long er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther as he lay,
How that his felawe gan upon hym calle,
And seyde, "Allas! for in an oxes stalle
This nyght I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now helpe me, deere brother, or I dye;
In alle haste com to me," he sayde.
This man out of his sleepe for feere abrayde; [5]
But whan that he was wakened of his sleepe,
He turned hym, and took of this no keepe;
Hym thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twies in his slepyng dremed hee.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as hym thoughte, and seide, "I am now slawe; [6]
Bihoold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwetyde,
And at the west gate of the toun," quod he,
"A carte ful of donge ther shaltow se,
In which my body is hid ful privelyl;

[1] profit
[2] nature
[3] great thanks
[4] thrive
[5] awoke with a start
[6] slain

Do thilke carte arresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;"
And tolde hym every point how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he foond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as soone as it was day,
To his felawes In he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.
The hostiler answerde hym anon,
And seyde, "Sire, your felawe is agon,
As soone as day he wente out of the toun."
This man gan fallen in [gret] suspecioun,
Remembrynge on hise dremes that he mette,
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dongcarte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in that same wise
As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeance and justice of this felonye:—
"My felawe mordred is this same nyght,
And in this carte he lith gapyng upright.
I crye out on the ministres," quod he,
"That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
Harrow! allas! heer lith my felawe slayn!"
What sholde I moore unto this tale sayn?
The peple outsterte,[1] and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the myddel of the dong they founde
The dede man that mordred was al newe.
O blisful God, that art so just and trewe!
Lo, howe that thou biwreyest[2] mordre alway!
Mordre wol out, that se we day by day.

[1] started out [2] betrayest

Mordre is so wlatsom[3] and abhomynable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled[4] be;
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or thre,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anon, ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so soore hym pyned,
And eek the hostiler so soore engyned,[5]
That they biknewe hire wikkednesse anon,
And were an-hanged by the nekkebon.
Heere may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
—I gabbe nat, so have I joye or blis,—
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, into a fer contree,
If that the wynd ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood full myrie upon an haven-side.
But on a day, agayn the eventyde,
The wynd gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.
Jolif and glad they wente unto hir reste,
And casten[6] hem ful erly for to saille;
But herkneth! to that o man fil a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in slepyng as he lay,
Hym mette a wonder dreem, agayn[7] the day;
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
And hym comanded, that he sholde abyde,
And seyde hym thus, "If thou tomorwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt;[8] my tale is at an ende."
He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde hym his viage [for] to lette;
As for that day, he preyde hym to byde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,

[3] heinous [6] intended
[4] concealed [7] just before
[5] tortured [8] drowned

Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
"No dreem," quod he, "may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thynges.
I sette not a straw by thy dremynges,
For swevenes been but vanytees and japes.
Men dreme alday of owles or of apes,
And of many a maze therwithal;
Men dreme of thyng that nevere was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heere abyde,
And thus forslewthen[1] wilfully thy tyde,
God woot it reweth me; and have good day."
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde half his cours y-seyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what myschaunce it eyled,
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And shipe and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it bisyde,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfore, faire Pertelote so deere,
By swiche ensamples olde yet maistow leere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I seye thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful soore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus' sone, the noble kyng
Of Mertenrike, how Kenelm mette a thyng;
A lite er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avysioun he say.[2]
His norice hym expowned every deel
His swevene, and bad hym for to kepe hym weel
For traisoun; but he nas but .vij. yeer oold,

[1] waste in sloth [2] saw

And therfore litel tale hath he toold[3]
Of any dreem, so hooly was his herte.
By God, I hadde levere than my sherte
That ye hadde rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warnynge of thynges that men after seen.
And forthermoore, I pray yow looketh wel
In the Olde Testament, of Daniel,
If he heeld dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Joseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher dremes be somtyme, I sey nat alle,
Warnynge of thynges that shul after falle.
Looke of Egipte the kyng, daun Pharao,
His baker and his butiller also,
Wher they no felte noon effect in dremes.
Who so wol seken actes of sondry remes,[4]
May rede of dremes many a wonder thyng.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde[5] kyng,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhanged bee?
Lo heere Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same nyght biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorne,
If thilke day he wente into bataille;
She warned hym, but it myghte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte natheles,
But he was slayn anon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to longe to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forthermoor,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no stoor,
For they been venymes, I woot it weel;
I hem diffye, I love hem never a deel.

[3] worth hath he counted [4] realms [5] Lydia

Now let us speke of myrthe, and stynte[1] al this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thyng God hath sent me large grace;
For whan I se the beautee of your face,
Ye been so scarlet reed aboute youre eyen,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, al so siker as *In principio,*
Mulier est hominis confusio;
Madame, the sentence of this Latyn is—
Womman is mannes joye and al his blis.
. . . . . .
I am so full of joye and of solas
That I diffye bothe swevene and dreem."
And with that word he fly doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eke hise hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he hadde founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
Real[2] he was, he was namoore aferd;
. . . . . .
He looketh as it were a grym leoun;
And on hise toos he rometh up and doun,
Hym deigned nat to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to hym rennen thanne hise wyves alle.
Thus roial, as a prince is in an halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure.
Whan that the monthe in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan God first maked man,
Was compleet, and passed were also
—Syn March bigan—thritty dayes and two,[3]
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
Hise sevene wyves walkynge by his syde,
Caste up hise eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somwhat moore.
He knew by kynde, and by noon oother loore,
That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.
"The sonne," he seyde, "is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and moore, ywis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they synge,
And se the fresshe floures how they sprynge;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas."
But sodeynly hym fil a sorweful cas;
For evere the latter ende of joye is wo.
Got woot that worldly joye is soone ago;
And if a rethor[4] koude faire endite,
He in a cronycle saufly myghte it write,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This storie is also trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful greet reverence.
Now wol I turne agayn to my sentence.
A colfox,[5] ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde wonned[6] yeres three,
By heigh ymaginacioun forn-cast,[7]
The same nyght thurghout the hegges brast[8]
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek hise wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undren[9] of the day,
Waitynge his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle
As gladly doon thise homycides alle,

[1] cease
[2] royal, regal
[3] May 3
[4] rhetorician
[5] black fox (with black feet, ears, and tail)
[6] dwelt
[7] premeditated
[8] burst
[9] nine A.M.

That in await liggen to mordre men.
O false mordrour, lurkynge in thy den!
O newe Scariot,[1] newe Genylon! [2]
False dissymilour, O Greek Synon,[3]
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flaugh fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forwoot [4] moot nedes bee.
After the opinioun of certein clerkis.
Witnesse on hym, that any parfit clerk is,
That in scole is greet altercacioun
In this mateere, and greet disputisoun,
And hath been of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren,[5]
As kan the hooly doctour Augustyn,
Or Boece,[6] or the bisshope Bradwardyn,[7]
Wheither that Goddes worthy forwityng
Streyneth me nedefully to doon a thyng,—
Nedely clepe [8] I symple necessitee;
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thyng, or do it noght,
Though God forwoot it, er that it was wroght;
Or if his wityng streyneth never a deel
But by necessitee condicioneel.
I wil not han to do of swich mateere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere,
That took his conseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he hadde met the dreem that I you tolde.
Wommennes conseils been ful ofte colde;
Wommannes conseil broghte us first to wo,
And made Adam fro Paradys to go,
Ther as he was ful myrie, and wel at ese.
But for I noot, to whom it myght displese,
If I conseil of wommen wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.[9]
Rede auctours, where they trete of swich mateere,
And what they seyn of wommen ye may heere.
Thise been cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
I kan noon harm of no womman divyne.
Faire in the soond, to bathe hire myrily,
Lith Pertelote, and alle hire sustres by,
Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
Soong murier than the mermayde in the see
—For Phisiologus [10] seith sikerly,
How that they syngen wel and myrily,—
And so bifel, that, as he cast his eye
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
Nothyng ne liste hym thanne for to crowe,
But cride anon, "cok, cok," and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayd in his herte;
For natureelly a beest desireth flee
Fro his contrarie,[11] if he may it see,
Though he never erst hadde seyn it with his eye.
This Chauntecleer, whan he gan hym espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde, "Gentil Sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me that am youre freend?
Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileynge.
I am nat come your conseil for tespye;
But trewely the cause of my comynge

[1] Judas Iscariot
[2] Ganelon, one of Charlemagne's peers, who betrayed Roland at Roncevaux. See the *Song of Roland* in one of the numerous translations.
[3] In Virgil, the Greek who falsely induced the Trojans to draw in the wooden horse.
[4] foreknows
[5] bolt . . . bran
[6] Boethius
[7] Thomas Bradwardine, Chancellor of the University of Oxford in the fourteenth century and author of a work entitled *De Causa Dei*.
[8] call
[9] in jest
[10] A work giving much popular lore about animals, etc.
[11] natural enemy

Was oonly for to herkne how that ye synge.
For trewely ye have as myrie a stevene,
As any aungel [hath], that is in hevene;
Therwith ye han in musyk moore feelynge
Than hadde Boece, or any that kan synge.
My lord youre fader—God his soule blesse!—
And eek your mooder, of hire gentillesse,
Han in myn hous y-been, to my greet ese;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of syngyng, I wol seye,
So moote I brouke[1] wel myne eyen tweye,
Save yow, herde I nevere man yet synge,
As dide youre fader in the morwenynge;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the moore strong,
He wolde so peyne hym, that with bothe hise eyen
He moste wynke, so loude he wolde cryen,
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That hym in song or wisedom myghte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,[2]
Among hise vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf hym a knok
Upon his leg, whil he was yong and nyce[3]
He made hym for to lese his benefice.[4]
But certeyn, ther nys no comparisoun
Bitwixe the wisedom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now syngeth, sire, for seinte charitee,
Lat se, konne ye youre fader countrefete?"
This Chauntecleer hise wynges gan to bete,
As man that koude his traysoun nat espie,
So was he ravysshed with his flaterie.
Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in youre courtes, and many a losengeour,[5]
That plesen yow wel moore, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste[6] of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye upon his toos,
Strecchynge his nekke, and heeld hise eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
And daun Russell the fox stirte up atones,
And by the gargat[7] hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode hym beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that hym sewed.
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Syn that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy servyce dide al his poweer,
Moore for delit, than world to multiplye,
Why woltestow suffre hym on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred,[8] deere maister soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy kyng Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deeth so soore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy loore,
The Friday for to chide, as diden ye?

[1] enjoy, retain
[2] The name of the ass in a twelfth century poem by Nigellus Wireker.
[3] foolish
[4] The cock failed to crow and wake the priest the morning when he was to be ordained.
[5] flatterer
[6] The Book of *Ecclesiasticus* in the *Apocrypha.*
[7] throat
[8] Geoffrey de Vinsauf, in whose art of poetry, the *Nova Poetria*, there is an artificial complaint against Friday, the day on which Richard I was wounded. Chaucer is making fun of it.

—For on a Friday soothly slayn was he;—
Thanne wolde I shewe yow how that I koude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry ne lamentacion
Was nevere of ladyes maad, whan Ilion
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite[1] swerd—
Whan he hadde hent kyng Priam by the berd,
And slayn hym—as seith us *Eneydos*—
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
Whan that hir housbonde hadde lost his lyf,
And that the Romayns hadde brent Cartage,
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir selven with a stedefast herte.
O woful hennes, right so criden ye,
As, whan that Nero brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatours wyves,
For that hir husbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now turne I wole to my tale agayn.
This sely wydwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crie and maken wo,
And out at dores stirten they anon,
And syen the fox toward the grove gon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden, "Out! harrow! and weylaway!
Ha, ha, the fox!" and after hym they ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ranne Colle oure dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
And Malkyn, with a dystaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and [eek] the verray hogges,
So were they fered for berkyng of the dogges
And shoutyng of the men and wommen eek,
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breek.
They yolleden as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle;[2]
The gees for feere flowen over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hydous was the noyse, a, *benedicitee*
Certes, he Jakke Straw, and his meynee,
Ne made nevere shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any Flemyng kille,[3]
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras they broghten bemes,[4] and of box,
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and powped,
And therwithal they shryked and they howped;
It semed as that hevene sholde falle.
Now, goode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeynly
The hope and pryde [eek] of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede, unto the fox he spak,
And seyde, "Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet wolde I seyn—as wys God helpe me,—
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence upon yow falle!
Now am I come unto the wodes syde,
Maugree[5] youre heed, the cok shal heere abyde;
I wol hym ete in feith, and that anon."
The fox answerde, "In feith, it shal be don,"—
And as he spak that word, al sodeynly
This cok brak from his mouth delyverly,

[1] drawn
[2] kill
[3] Jack Straw and his band killed many Flemings in 1381.
[4] trumpets
[5] in spite of

And heighe upon a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was [y]-gon,
"Allas!" quod he, "O Chauntecleer, allas!
I have to yow," quod he, "y-doon trespas,
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
Whan I yow hente, and broght out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
I shal seye sooth to yow, God help me so."
"Nay, thanne," quod he, "I shrewe us bothe two,
And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na moore, thurgh thy flaterye
Do me to synge and wynke with myn eye.
For he that wynketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, God lat him nevere thee!" [1]
"Nay," quod the fox, "but God yeve hym meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees."
Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralite, goode men.
For Seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To oure doctrine it is y-write, ywis.
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.
Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord,[2] so make us alle goode men;
And brynge us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

Heere is ended the Nonnes preestes tale.

[1] thrive
[2] William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1381 to 1396, was probably the Nun's Priest's lord.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S TALE

In tholde dayes of Kyng Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
All was this land fulfild of fairye.
The elf-queene with hir joly compaignye
Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;
This was the olde opinion, as I rede.
I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
But now kan no man se none elves mo.
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of lymytours [3] and othere hooly freres,
That serchen every lond and every streem,
As thikke as motes in the sonne beem,
Blessynge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
Thropes,[4] bernes, shipnes,[5] dayeryes,
This maketh that ther been no fairyes.
For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
Ther walketh now the lymytour hymself
In undermeles [6] and in morwenynges,
And seyth his matyns and his hooly thynges
As he gooth in his lymytacioun.
Wommen may go saufly up and doun,
In every bussh, or under every tree;
Ther is noon oother incubus but he,
And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.
And so bifel that this Kyng Arthour
Hadde in hous a lusty bacheler,[7]
That on a day cam ridynge fro ryver;[8]
And happed that, allone as she was born,
He saugh a mayde walkynge hym biforn,
Of which mayde anon, maugree hir heed,
By verray force birafte hire maydenhed;
For which oppression was swich clamour
And swich pursute unto the Kyng Arthour,
That dampned was this knyght for to be deed

[3] See *Prologue*, ll. 208 ff.
[4] villages
[5] stables or shelters for cattle
[6] afternoons
[7] Cf. *Prologue*, line 80
[8] *i.e.*, where he had been hawking

By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed
Paraventure—swich was the statut tho—
But that the queene and othere ladyes mo
So longe preyden the kyng of grace,
Til he his lyf hym graunted in the place,
And yaf hym to the queen al at hir wille
To chese wheither she wolde hym save or spille.
The queene thanketh the kyng with al hir myght,
And after this thus spak she to the knyght,
Whan that she saugh hir tyme upon a day:
"Thou standest yet," quod she, "in swich array
That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
I grante thee lyf if thou kanst tellen me
What thyng is it that wommen moost desiren.
Be war and keepe thy nekke boon from iren,
And if thou kanst nat tellen it anon,
Yet shal I yeve thee leve for to gon
A twelf-month and a day, to seche and leere
An answere suffisant in this mateere.
And suretee wol I han er that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place."
Wo was this knyght and sorwefully he siketh; [1]
But what! he may nat do al as hym liketh.
And at the laste he chees [2] hym for to wende,
And come agayn right at the yeres ende
With swich answere as God wolde hym purveye;
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.
He seketh every hous and every place
Where as he hopeth for to fynde grace
To lerne what thyng wommen loven moost;
But he ne koude arryven in no coost [3]
Wher as he myghte fynde in this mateere
Two creatures accordynge in-feere.[4]
Somme seyde wommen loven best richesse;
Somme seyde, honour; somme seyde, jolynesse; [5]
Somme, riche array; somme seyden, lust abedd,
And ofte tyme to be wydwe and wedde.
Somme seyde that oure hertes been moost esed
Whan that we been y-flatered and y-plesed.
He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
A man shal wynne vs best with flaterye,
And with attendance, and with bisynesse,
Been we y-lymed,[6] bothe moore and lesse.
And somme seyn that we loven best
For to be free and do right as us lest,
And that no man repreve us of oure vice,
But seye that we be wise and no thyng nyce.[7]
For trewely ther is noon of us alle,
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,[8]
That we nel kike, for he seith us sooth;
Assay, and he shal fynde it that so dooth.
For be we never so vicious [9] with-inne,
We wol been holden wise, and clene of synne.
And somme seyn that greet delit han we
For to been holden stable and eke secree,
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
And nat biwreye thyng that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;[10]
Pardee, we wommen konne no thyng hele; [11]
Witnesse on Myda; [12] wol ye heere the tale?
Ovyde, amonges othere thynges smale,
Seyde Myda hadde under his longe heres
Growynge upon his heed two asses eres,
The which vice he hydde, as he best myghte,

[1] sighs
[2] chose
[3] region
[4] together
[5] amusement
[6] caught
[7] foolish
[8] sore place
[9] wicked
[10] rake handle
[11] conceal
[12] Midas

Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte,
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it namo.
He loved hire moost, and triste[1] hire also;
He preyde hire that to no creature
She sholde tellen of his disfigure.
She swoor him "nay, for al this world to wynne,
She nolde do that vileynye or synne,
To make hir housbonde han so foul a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame."
But natheless hir thoughte that she dyde,[2]
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;
Hir thoughte it swal so soore about hir herte,
That nedely som word hire moste asterte.[3]
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys[4] faste by she ran;
Til she came there her herte was a-fyre,
And as a bitore[5] bombleth in the myre,
She leyde hir mouth unto the water doun:
"Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,"
Quod she; "to thee I telle it, and namo.
Myn housbonde hath longe asses erys two!
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;
I myghte no lenger kepe it, out of doute."
Heere may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot: we kan no conseil hyde.
The remenant of the tale if ye wol heere,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it leere.[6]
This knyght, of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he myghte nat come therby,
This is to seye, what wommen love moost,
With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the goost;
But hoom he gooth,—he myghte nat sojourne.

The day was come that homward moste he tourne,
And in his wey it happed hym to ryde,
In al this care, under a forest syde,
Wher-as he saugh upon a daunce go
Of ladyes foure and twenty, and yet mo;
Toward the which daunce he drow ful yerne,[7]
In hope that some wysdom sholde he lerne.
But certeinly, er he came fully there,
Vanysshed was this daunce, he nyste where.
No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
Save on the grene he saugh sittynge a wyf;[8]
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
Agayn[9] the knyght this olde wyf gan ryse,
And seyde, "Sire knyght, heer forth ne lith no wey.
Tel me, what that ye seken, by youre fey.
Paraventure it may the bettre be,
Thise olde folk kan muchel thyng," quod she.
"My leeue mooder," quod this knyght, "certeyn
I nam but deed, but-if that I kan seyn
What thyng it is that wommen moost desire.
Koude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quite youre hire."
"Plight me thy trouthe, heere in myn hand," quod she;
"The nexte thyng that I requere thee,
Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy myght;
And I wol telle it yow er it be nyght."
"Have heer my trouthe," quod the knyght; "I grante."
"Thanne," quod she, "I dar me wel avante,
Thy lyf is sauf, for I wold stonde therby,
Upon my lyf, the queene wol seye as I.
Lat se which is the proudeste of hem alle,

[1] trusted
[2] it seemed to her that she would die
[3] escape
[4] marsh
[5] bittern booms
[6] learn
[7] eagerly
[8] woman
[9] to meet

That wereth on a couerchief or a calle,[1]
That dar seye nay of that I shal thee teche.
Lat us go forth with-outen lenger speche."
Tho rowned [2] she a pistel [3] in his ere,
And bad hym to be glad and have no fere.
Whan they be comen to the court, this knyght
Seyde he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,[4]
And redy was his answere, as he sayde.
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
And many a wydwe, for that they been wise,
The queene hir-self sittynge as Justise,
Assembled been, his answere for to heere;
And afterward this knyght was bode appeere.
To every wight comanded was silence,
And that the knyght sholde telle in audience,
What thyng that worldly wommen loven best.
This knyght ne stood nat stille as doth a best,
But to his questioun anon answerede,
With manly voys that al the court it herde:
"My lige lady, generally," quod he,
"Wommen desiren have souereynetee
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie hym above;
This is youre mooste desir, thogh ye me kille.
Dooth as yow list; I am at youre wille."
In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde,
Ne wydwe, that contraried that he sayde,
But seyden he was worthy han his lyf.
And with that word up stirte the olde wyf,
Which that the knyght saugh sittynge in the grene:
"Mercy," quod she, "my sovereyn lady queene,
Er that youre court departe, do me right.
I taughte this answere unto the knyght,
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thyng I wolde hym requere,
He wolde it do, if it lay in his myght.
Bifore the court thanne preye I thee, sir knyght,"
Quod she, "that thou me take unto thy wyf;
For wel thou woost that I have kept thy lyf.
If I sey fals, sey nay, vpon thy fey!" [5]
This knyght answerde, "Allas and weylawey!
I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.[6]
For Goddes love, as chees a newe requeste;
Taak al my good and lat my body go."
"Nay thanne," quod she, "I shrewe us bothe two!
For thogh that I be foul, oold, and poore
I nolde for al the metal, ne for oore,
That under erthe is grave,[7] or lith above,
But-if thy wyf I were and eek thy love."
"My love?" quod he. "Nay, my dampnacion!
Allas, that any of my nacion
Sholde evere so foule disparaged be!"
But al for noght: thende is this, that he
Constreyned was, he nedes moste hire wedde,
And taketh his olde wyf and gooth to bedde.
Now wolden som men seye paraventure
That for my necligence I do no cure [8]
To tellen yow the joye and al tharray
That at the feeste was that ilke day;
To which thyng shortly answere I shal.
I seye ther nas no joye ne feeste at al;
Ther nas but hevynesse and muche sorwe.
For prively he wedded hire on a morwe,[9]

[1] hair net, often elaborately ornamented
[2] whispered
[3] message
[4] promised
[5] faith
[6] promise
[7] buried
[8] attention
[9] morning

And al day after hidde hym as an owle;
So wo was hym, his wyf looked so foule.
Greet was the wo the knyght hadde in his thoght
Whan he was with his wyf abedde y-broght;
He walweth and he turneth to and fro.
His olde wyf lay smylynge everemo,
And seyde, "O deere housbonde, *benedicite!*
Fareth every knyght thus with his wyf as ye?
Is this the lawe of Kyng Arthures hous?
Is every knyght of his so dangerous? [1]
I am youre owene love and youre wyf
I am she which that saved hath youre lyf,
And certes, yet dide I yow nevere unright:
Why fare ye thus with me this firste nyght?
Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit.
What is my gilt? For Goddes love, tel it
And it shal been amended, if I may."
"Amended?" quod this knyght. "Allas! nay, nay!
It wol nat been amended nevere mo!
Thou art so loothly, and so oold also,
And ther-to comen of so lough a kynde,
That litel wonder is thogh I walwe and wynde.[2]
So wolde God myn herte wolde breste!"
"Is this," quod she, "the cause of youre unreste?"
"Ye, certeinly," quod he, "no wonder is."
"Now, sire," quod she, "I koude amende al this,
If that me liste, er it were dayes thre,
So wel ye myghte bere yow unto me.
But for ye speken of swich gentillesse [3]
As is descended out of old richesse,
That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
Looke who that is moost vertuous alway,
Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he kan,
And taak hym for the grettest gentil man.
Crist wole we clayme of hym oure gentillesse,
Nat of oure eldres for hire old richesse,
For thogh they yeve vs al hir heritage,
For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
Yet may they nat biquethe for no thyng
To noon of us hir vertuous lyvyng,
That made hem gentil men y-called be,
And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.
Wel kan the wise poete of Florence
That highte Dant [4] speken in this sentence;
Lo, in swich maner rym is Dantes tale:
"Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale
Prowesse of man, for God of his goodnesse
Wole that of hym we clayme oure gentillesse." [5]
For of oure eldres may we no thyng clayme
But temporel thyng, that man may hurte and mayme.
Eek every wight woot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted natureelly
Unto a certeyn lynage doun the lyne,
Pryvee nor apert, thanne wolde they nevere fyne [6]
To doon of gentillesse the faire office;
They myghte do no vileynye or vice.
Taak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
Bitwix this and the mount of Kaukasous,
And lat men shette the dores and go thenne,
Yet wolde the fyr as faire lye and brenne
As twenty thousand men myghte it biholde;
His office natureel ay wol it holde
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.

[1] hard to please
[2] twist and turn
[3] gentility
[4] Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)
[5] Dante, *Purgat.* VII. 121-23
[6] cease

Heere may ye se wel how that genterye
Is nat annexed to possession,
Sith folk ne doon hir operacion
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kynde.
For, God it woot, men may wel often fynde
A lordes sone do shame and vileynye;
And he that wole han pris of his gentrye,
For he was born of a gentil hous,
And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
And nel hym selven do no gentil dedis,
Ne folwen his gentil auncestre that deed is,
He nys nat gentil, be he duc or erl;
For vileyns synful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse nys but renomee [1]
Of thyne auncestres, for hire heigh bountee,[2]
Which is a strange [3] thyng to thy persone.
Thy gentillesse cometh fro God allone;
Thanne comth oure verray gentillesse of grace.
It was no thyng biquethe us with oure place.
Thenketh hou noble, as seith Valerius,[4]
Was thilke Tullius Hostillius [5]
That out of poverte roos to heigh noblesse.
Reed Senek, and redeth eek Boece; [6]
Ther shul ye seen expres that no drede is,
That he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis;
And therfore, leeve housbonde, I thus conclude:
Al were it that myne auncestres weren rude,
Yet may the hye God, and so hope I,
Grante me grace to lyven vertuously;
Thanne am I gentil whan that I bigynne
To lyven vertuously and weyve synne.

And ther-as ye of poverte me repreeve,
The hye God on whom that we bileeve
In wilful poverte chees to lyve his lyf.
And certes every man, mayden, or wyf
May understonde that Jhesus, hevene kyng,
Ne wolde nat chesen vicious lyvyng.
Glad poverte is an honeste thyng, certeyn;
This wole Senec and othere clerkes seyn.
Who-so that halt hym payd [7] of his poverte,
I holde hym riche, al [8] hadden he nat a sherte.
He that coveiteth is a povere wight,
For he wolde han that is nat in his myght.
But he that noght hath, ne coveiteth have,
Is riche, although ye holde hym but a knave.

Verray poverte, it syngeth proprely;
Juvenal seith of poverte myrily:
"The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
Bifore the theves he may synge and pleye." [9]
Poverte is hatéful good, and, as I gesse,
A ful greet bryngere out of bisynesse;
A greet amendere eek of sapience
To hym that taketh it in pacience.
Poverte is this, al-though it seme alenge: [10]
Possession that no wight wol chalenge.
Poverte ful ofte whan a man is lowe
Maketh his God and eek hymself to knowe.
Poverte a spectacle [11] is, as thynketh me,
Thurgh which he may hise verray freendes see.
And therfore, sire, syn that I noght yow greve,
Of my poverte namoore ye me repreve.

Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me;
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Seyn that men sholde an oold wight doon favour,
And clepe hym fader, for youre gentillesse;
And auctours shal I fynden, as I gesse.

[1] renown
[2] goodness
[3] external
[4] Valerius Maximus, *De Humili Loco Natis*, Bk. III, Chap. 4
[5] Tullus Hostillus, third legendary King of Rome (672-640 B.C.)
[6] Seneca and Boethius
[7] satisfied
[8] although
[9] Juvenal, *Satires*, X. 21-2
[10] miserable
[11] a kind of telescope

Now ther ye seye that I am foul and old.
Than drede you noght to been a cokewold; [1]
For filthe and eelde, al-so moot I thee,
Been grete wardeyns upon chastitee.
But nathelees, syn I knowe youre delit,
I shal fulfille youre worldly appetit.
Chese now (quod she) oon of thise thynges tweye,
To han me foul and old til that I deye,
And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
And nevere yow displese in al my lyf
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take youre aventure of the repair [2]
That shal be to youre hous by cause of me,
Or in som oother place, may wel be.
Now chese your selven wheither that yow liketh."
This knyght avyseth hym and sore siketh,
But atte laste he seyde in this manere:
"My lady and my love, and wyf so deere,
I put me in youre wise governance;
Cheseth youreself which may be moost plesance,
And moost honour to yow and me also.
I do no fors [3] the wheither of the two;
For as yow liketh, it suffiseth me."
"Thanne have I gete of yow maistrie," quod she,
"Syn I may chese and governe as me lest."
"Ye, certes, wyf," quod he, "I holde it best."

"Kys me," quod she, "we be no lenger wrothe;
For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe:
This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
I prey to God that I moote sterven wood,[4]
But I to yow be al-so good and trewe
As evere was wyf, syn that the world was newe.
And but I be tomorn as fair to seene
As any lady emperice or queene
That is bitwixe the Est and eke the West,
Dooth with my lyf and deth right as yow lest.
Cast up the curtyn, looke how that it is."
And whan the knyght saugh verraily al this,
That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,
For joye he hente hire in hise armes two,
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;
A thousand tyme arewe [5] he gan hire kisse.
And she obeyed hym in every thyng
That myghte doon hym plesance or likyng.
And thus they lyve, unto hir lyves ende,
In parfit joye; and Jhesu Crist us sende
Housbondes meeke, yonge, fressh a bedde,
And grace toverbyde hem that we wedde.
And eek I pray Jhesu shorte hir lyves
That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
And olde and angry nygardes of dispence,
God sende hem soone verray pestilence.

Heere endeth the Wyves tale of Bathe.

[1] cuckold, husband of unfaithful wife
[2] resorting
[3] care not
[4] mad
[5] in a row

THE POPULAR BALLAD

A BALLAD is "a song which tells a story." It belongs to oral as opposed to written literature, and has certain well-marked characteristics that serve readily to differentiate it from all other kinds of narrative poetry. First, it is "popular," that is, the property of the people. The ballads are all anonymous. Their authorship has long since been forgotten. They are often thought to be the product of a homogeneous group composing under the impulse of a recent occurrence or a common emotion. This is not impossible; indeed, the process has been observed to-day. In a recent collection of ballads sung by the Maine lumberjacks[1] the editor quotes one of the men, from whom he obtained a ballad, as to their origin: "Well," he said, "I will tell you. Something happens. Then, at night, when the fellows are gathered around the fire, some one, who can sing better than the rest, starts a song, and the rest chip in. Each adds a little, some make changes and additions, until the song is made. Probably one hundred and fifty took part in making that song." One need not think that all ballads have had such a communal origin. Many were doubtless composed by individuals. But they soon became common property; and since they were not written down but carried in the memory and transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation, they have undergone changes through repetition by many singers until, as we have them to-day, they are truly the product of the people.

This popular transmission of the ballad is responsible for most of its other special characteristics. The simple stanza forms, the frequent refrains, the repetition of stock phrases and often of whole stanzas, the complete objectivity and impersonality of the narrative, the brevity which results from telling only the essential points in the story and leaving the rest to the imagination,—these are obviously the effects of folk transmission. Other folk characteristics are equally apparent, such as the frank acceptance of the supernatural, the simple-minded credulity that is content with gross improbabilities in the plot, the lavish reference to gold, silver, and precious stones to heighten the effect, and the blunt representation of tragedy and death unsentimentalized.

It is a mistake to expect in the ballad the polish of later, more sophisticated art forms. Ballad art is wholly untutored, instinctive. The English and Scottish popular ballads should be judged for what they are; for of their kind there is nothing finer in the literature of any country.

[1] R. P. GRAY. *Songs and Ballads of the Maine Lumberjacks, with other songs from Maine.* Cambridge, 1924.

ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS [1]

THE TWA [2] SISTERS

1. There was twa sisters in a bowr,—
   Edinburgh, Edinburgh!
   There was twa sisters in a bowr,—
   Stirling for ay!
   There was twa sisters in a bowr,
   There came a knight to be their wooer.
   Bonny Saint Johnston stands upon Tay.

2. He courted the eldest wi glove an ring,
   But he lovd the youngest above a' thing.

3. He courted the eldest wi brotch [3] an knife
   But lovd the youngest as his life.

4. The eldest she was vexed sair,[4]
   And much envi'd her sister fair.

5. Into her bowr she could not rest,
   Wi grief an spite she almos brast.[5]

6. Upon a morning fair an clear,
   She cried upon her sister dear:

7. "O sister, come to yon sea stran,[6]
   An see our father's ships come to lan." [7]

8. She's taen her by the milk-white han,
   An led her down to yon sea stran.

9. The younges[t] stood upon a stane,[8]
   The eldest came and threw her in.

10. She tooke her by the middle sma,
    An dashd her bonny back to the jaw.[9]

11. "O sister, sister, tak my han,
    An Ise [10] mack you heir to a' my lan.

12. "O sister, sister, tak my middle,
    An yes get my goud [11] and my gouden girdle.

13. "O sister, sister, save my life,
    An I swear Ise never be nae man's wife."

14. "Foul fa the han that I should tacke,
    It twin'd [12] me an my wardles make.[13]

15. "Your cherry cheeks an yallow hair
    Gars me gae [14] maiden for evermair."

16. Sometimes she sank, an sometimes she swam
    Till she came down yon bonny mill-dam.

17. O out it came the miller's son,
    An saw the fair maid swimmin in.

18. "O father, father, draw your dam,
    Here's either a mermaid or a swan."

19. The miller quickly drew the dam,
    An there he found a drownd woman.

20. You coudna see her yallow hair
    For gold and pearle that were so rare.

21. You couldn't see her middle sma
    For gouden girdle that was sae braw.[15]

22. You couldna see her fingers white,
    For gouden rings that was sae gryte.[16]

23. An by there came a harper fine,
    That harped to the king at dine.

The complete and authoritative collection of ballads is F. J. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols., Boston, 1882-98. A one-volume abridgement by G. L. Kittredge and Helen C. Sargent, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Boston, 1904, contains one or more versions of each ballad and a fine introduction by Professor Kittredge.

[2] two
[3] brooch
[4] sore
[5] burst
[6] strand
[7] land
[8] stone
[9] wave
[10] I shall
[11] you shall get my gold
[12] separated
[13] world's mate
[14] makes me go
[15] brave, fine
[16] great

24. When he did look that lady upon,
He sighd and made a heavy moan.

25. He's taen three locks o her yallow hair,
An wi them strung his harp sae fair.

26. The first tune he did play and sing,
Was, "Farewell to my father the king."

27. The nextin tune that he playd syne,[1]
Was, "Farewell to my mother the queen."

28. The lasten tune that he playd then,
Was, "Wae[2] to my sister, fair Ellen."

THE CRUEL BROTHER

1. There was three ladies playd at the ba,[3]
With a hey ho and a lillie gay
There came a knight and played oer them a'.
As the primrose spreads so sweetly.

2. The eldest was baith[4] tall and fair,
But the youngest was beyond compare.

3. The midmost had a graceful mien,
But the youngest lookd like beautie's queen.

4. The knight bowd low to a' the three,
But to the youngest he bent his knee.

5. The ladie turned her head aside,
The knight he woo'd her to be his bride.

6. The ladie blushd a rosy red,
And sayd, "Sir knight, I'm too young to wed."

7. "O ladie fair, give me your hand,
And I'll make you ladie of a' my land."

8. "Sir knight, ere ye my favor win,
You maun get consent frae[5] a' my kin."

9. He's got consent frae her parents dear,
And likewise frae her sisters fair.

10. He's got consent frae her kin each one,
But forgot to spiek to her brother John.

11. Now, when the wedding day was come,
The knight would take his bonny bride home.

12. And many a lord and many a knight
Came to behold that ladie bright.

13. And there was nae man that did her see
But wishd himself bridegroom to be.

14. Her father dear led her down the stair,
And her sisters twain they kissd her there.

15. Her mother dear led her thro the closs,[6]
And her brother John set her on her horse.

16. She leand her oer the saddle-bow,
To give him a kiss ere she did go.

17. He has taen a knife, baith lang and sharp,
And stabbd that bonny bride to the heart.

18. She hadno ridden half thro the town,
Until her heart's blude staind her gown.

19. "Ride softly on," says the best young man,
"For I think our bonny bride looks pale and wan."

[1] afterwards
[2] woe
[3] ball
[4] both
[5] must get consent from
[6] courtyard

20. "O lead me gently up yon hill,
And I'll there sit down, and make my will."

21. "O what will you leave to your father dear?"
"The silver-shode steed that brought me here."

22. "What will you leave to your mother dear?"
"My velvet pall and my silken gear." [1]

23. "What will you leave to your sister Anne?"
"My silken scarf and my gowden fan."

24. "What will you leave to your sister Grace?"
"My bloody cloaths to wash and dress."

25. "What will you leave to your brother John?"
"The gallows-tree to hang him on."

26. "What will you leave to your brother John's wife?"
"The wilderness to end her life."

27. This ladie fair in her grave was laid,
And many a mass was oer her said.

28. But it would have made your heart right sair,
To see the bridegroom rive his haire.

EDWARD

1. "Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,[2]
Edward, Edward,
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae [3] sad gang yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair [4] bot hee O."

2. "Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O."
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

3. "Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Sum other dule ye drie [5] O."
"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

4. "And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,
Edward, Edward,
And whatten penance will ye drie for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

5. "And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,[6]
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O?"
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,[7]
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand till they doun fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee O."

[1] clothes
[2] drop with blood
[3] so
[4] no more
[5] sorrow you suffer
[6] hall
[7] fall

6. "And what wul ye leive to your bairns[1] and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"
"The warldis room, late them beg thrae[2] life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."

7. "And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counseils ye gave to me O."

HIND HORN

1. In Scotland there was a babie born,
Lilie lal, etc.
And his name it was called young Hind[3] Horn.
With a fal lal, etc.

2. He sent a letter to our king
That he was in love with his daughter Jean.

3. He's gien[4] to her a silver wand,
With seven living lavrocks[5] sitting thereon.

4. She's gien to him a diamond ring,
With seven bright diamonds set therein.

5. "When this ring grows pale and wan,
You may know by it my love is gane."

6. One day as he looked his ring upon,
He saw the diamonds pale and wan.

7. He left the sea and came to land,
And the first that he met was an old beggar man.

8. "What news, what news?" said young Hind Horn;
"No news, no news," said the old beggar man.

9. "No news," said the beggar, "no news at a',
But there is a wedding in the king's ha.

10. "But there is a wedding in the king's ha,
That has halden[6] these forty days and twa."

11. "Will ye lend me your begging coat?
And I'll lend you my scarlet cloak.

12. "Will you lend me your beggar's rung?[7]
And I'll gie you my steed to ride upon.

13. "Will you lend me your wig o hair,
To cover mine, because it is fair?"

14. The auld beggar man was bound for the mill,
But young Hind Horn for the king's hall.

15. The auld beggar man was bound for to ride,
But young Hind Horn was bound for the bride.

[1] children
[2] through
[3] young man
[4] given
[5] lark
[6] been held
[7] staff

16. When he came to the king's gate,
He sought a drink for Hind Horn's sake.

17. The bride came down with a glass of wine,
When he drank out the glass, and dropt in the ring.

18. "O got ye this by sea or land?
Or got ye it off a dead man's hand?"

19. "I got not it by sea, I got it by land,
And I got it, madam, out of your own hand."

20. "O I'll cast off my gowns of brown,
And beg wi you frae town to town.

21. "O I'll cast off my gowns of red,
And I'll beg wi you to win my bread."

22. "Ye needna cast off your gowns of brown
For I'll make you lady o many a town.

23. "Ye needna cast off your gowns of red,
It's only a sham, the begging o my bread."

24. The bridegroom he had wedded the bride,
But young Hind Horn he took her to bed.

THE TWA CORBIES [1]

1. As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies making a mane; [2]
The tane unto the t'other say,
"Where sall we gang [3] and dine today?"

2. "In behint yon auld fail dyke,[4]
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens [5] that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

3. "His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

4. "Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,[6]
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een; [7]
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
We'll theek [8] our nest when it grows bare.

5. "Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

[1] crows
[2] moan
[3] go
[4] turf wall
[5] knows
[6] neck-bone
[7] eyes
[8] thatch
[9] hillside
[10] lock

THOMAS RYMER AND THE QUEEN OF ELFLAND

1. True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
And he beheld a ladie gay,
A ladie that was brisk and bold,
Come riding oer the fernie brae.[9]

2. Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
Her mantel of the velvet fine,
At ilka tett [10] of her horse's mane
Hung fifty silver bells and nine.

3. True Thomas he took off his hat,
And bowed him low down till his knee:

"All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For your peer on earth I never did see."

4. "O no, O no, True Thomas," she says,
"That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
And I'm come here for to visit thee.

4*a*. ["Now gin ye kiss my mouth, Thomas,
Ye mauna miss my fair bodee;
Then ye may een gang hame and tell
That ye've lain wi a gay ladee."

4*b*. "O gin I loe [1] a lady fair,
Nae ill tales o her wad [2] I teli,
And it's wi thee I fain wad gae,
Tho it were een to heavn or hell."]

5. "But ye maun go wi me now, Thomas,
True Thomas, ye maun go wi me,
For ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro weel or wae as may chance to be."

6. She turned about her milk-white steed,
And took True Thomas up behind,
And aye wheneer her bridle rang,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

7. For forty days and forty nights
He wade thro red blude to the knee,
And he saw neither sun nor moon,
But heard the roaring of the sea.

8. O they rade on, and further on,
Until they came to a garden green:
"Light down, light down, ye ladie free,
Some of that fruit let me pull to thee."

9. "O no, O no, True Thomas," she says,
"That fruit maun not be touched by thee,
For a' the plagues that are in hell
Light on the fruit of this countrie.

10. "But I have a loaf here in my lap,
Likewise a bottle of claret wine,
And now ere we go farther on,
We'll rest a while, and ye may dine."

11. When he had eaten and drunk his fill,
"Lay down your head upon my knee,"
The lady sayd, "ere we climb yon hill,
And I will show you fairlies [3] three.

12. "O see not ye yon narrow road,
So thick beset wi thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Tho after it but few enquires.

13. "And see not ye that braid [4] braid road,
That lies across yon lillie leven? [5]
That is the path of wickedness,
Tho some call it the road to heaven.

14. "And see not ye that bonnie road,
Which winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
Whe[re] you and I this night maun gae.

[1] if I love [2] would
[3] wonders
[4] broad
[5] lovely glade

15. "But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
Whatever you may hear or see,
For gin ae word you should chance to speak,
You will neer get back to your ain countrie."

16. He has gotten a coat of the even [1] cloth,
And a pair of shoes of velvet green,
And till seven years were past and gone
True Thomas on earth was never seen.

SIR PATRICK SPENCE

1. The king sits in Dumferling [2] toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

2. Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spence is the best sailor
That sails upon the se."

3. The king has written a braid [3] letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.

4. The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch [4] lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

5. "O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
To sail upon the se!

6. "Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:"
"O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.

7. "Late late yestreen [5] I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme."

8. O our Scots nobles wer richt laith [6]
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Thair hats they swam aboone.

9. O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spence
Cum sailing to the land.

10. O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
For they'll se thame na mair.

11. Haf owre,[7] haf owre to Aberdour,[8]
It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spence,
Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

LORD THOMAS AND FAIR ANNET

1. Lord Thomas and Fair Annet
Sate a' day on a hill;
Whan night was cum, and sun was sett,
They had not talkt their fill.

2. Lord Thomas said a word in jest,
Fair Annet took it ill:
"A, I will nevir wed a wife
Against my ain friends' will."

[1] smooth
[2] Dumferline, near Edinburgh
[3] broad
[4] laugh
[5] yesterday evening
[6] right loath
[7] half over
[8] village on the Firth of Forth

3. "Gif ye wull nevir wed a wife,
A wife wull neir wed yee:"
Sae he is hame to tell his mither,
And knelt upon his knee.

4. "O rede,[1] O rede, mither," he says,
"A gude rede gie to mee;
O sall I tak the nut-browne bride,
And let Faire Annet bee?"

5. "The nut-browne bride haes gowd and gear,
Fair Annet she has gat nane;
And the little beauty Fair Annet haes
O it wull soon be gane."

6. And he has till his brother gane:
"Now, brother, rede ye mee;
A, sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
And let Fair Annet bee?"

7. "The nut-browne bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-browne bride has kye; [2]
I wad hae ye marrie the nut-browne bride,
And cast Fair Annet bye."

8. "Her oxen may dye i the house, billie,[3]
And her kye into the byre,[4]
And I sall hae nothing to mysell
Bot a fat fadge [5] by the fyre."

9. And he has till his sister gane:
"Now, sister, rede ye mee;
O sall I marrie the nut-browne bride,
And set Fair Annet free?"

10. "I'se rede ye tak Fair Annet, Thomas,
And let the browne bride alane;
Lest ye sould sigh, and say, Alace,
What is this we brought hame!"

11. "No, I will tak my mither's counsel,
And marrie me owt o hand;
And I will tak the nut-browne bride,
Fair Annet may leive the land."

12. Up then rose Fair Annet's father,
Twa hours or it wer day,
And he is gane into the bower
Wherein Fair Annet lay.

13. "Rise up, rise up, Fair Annet," he says,
"Put on your silken sheene;
Let us gae to St. Marie's kirke,
And see that rich weddeen."

14. "My maides, gae to my dressing-roome,
And dress to me my hair;
Whaireir yee laid a plait before,
See yee lay ten times mair.

15. "My maids, gae to my dressing-room,
And dress to me my smock;
The one half is o the holland fine,
The other o needle-work."

16. The horse Fair Annet rade upon,
He amblit like the wind;
Wi siller he was shod before,
Wi burning gowd behind.

17. Four and twanty siller bells
Wer a' tyed till his mane,
And yae tift [6] o the norland wind,
They tinkled ane by ane.

18. Four and twanty gay gude knichts
Rade by Fair Annet's side,
And four and twanty fair ladies,
As gin [7] she had ben a bride.

19. And whan she cam to Marie's kirk,
She sat on Marie's stean: [8]
The cleading [9] that Fair Annet had on
It skinkled [10] in their een.

[1] counsel
[2] cattle
[3] brother
[4] cow-house
[5] fat, clumsy woman
[6] whiff
[7] if
[8] stone seat at door
[9] clothing
[10] sparkled

20. And whan she cam into the kirk,
She shimmerd like the sun;
The belt that was about her waist
Was a' wi pearles bedone.[1]

21. She sat her by the nut-browne bride,
And her een they wer sae clear,
Lord Thomas he clean forgat the bride,
Whan Fair Annet drew near.

22. He had a rose into his hand,
He gae it kisses three,
And reaching by the nut-browne bride,
Laid it on Fair Annet's knee.

23. Up than spak the nut-browne bride,
She spak wi meikle[2] spite:
"And whair gat ye that rose-water,
That does mak yee sae white?"

24. "O I did get the rose-water
Whair ye wull neir get nane,
For I did get that very rose-water
Into my mither's wame."

25. The bride she drew a long bodkin
Frae out her gay head-gear,
And strake Fair Annet unto the heart,
That word spak nevir mair.

26. Lord Thomas he saw Fair Annet wex[3] pale
And marvelit what mote[4] bee;
But whan he saw her dear heart's blude,
A' wood-wroth[5] wexed hee.

27. He drew his dagger, that was sae sharp,
That was sae sharp and meet,
And drave it into the nut-browne bride,
That fell deid at his feit.

28. "Now stay for me, dear Annet," he sed,
"Now stay, my dear," he cry'd;
Then strake the dagger untill his heart,
And fell deid by her side.

29. Lord Thomas was buried without kirkwa,
Fair Annet within the quiere,
And o the tane thair grew a birk,[6]
The other a bonny briere.

30. And ay they grew, and ay they threw,[7]
As they wad faine be neare;
And by this ye may ken right weil
They were twa luvers deare.

[1] ornamented
[2] great, much
[3] wax, grow
[4] might
[5] madly angered

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN

1. It was in and about the Martinmas time,[8]
When the green leaves were a falling,
That Sir John Græme, in the West Country,
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

2. He sent his man down through the town,
To the place where she was dwelling:
"O haste and come to my master dear,
Gin ye be Barbara Allan."

3. O hooly, hooly[9] rose she up,
To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by,
"Young man, I think you're dying."

[6] birch
[7] twisted
[8] St. Martin's day, Nov. 11
[9] softly

4. "O it's I'm sick, and very, very sick,
And 'tis a' for Barbara Allan:"
"O the better for me ye's never be,
Tho your heart's blood were a spilling.

5. "O dinna ye mind, young man," said she,
"When ye was in the tavern a drinking,
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan?"

6. He turned his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing:
"Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan."

7. And slowly, slowly raise she up,
And slowly, slowly left him,
And sighing said, she coud not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.

8. She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell[1] ringing,
And every jow[2] that the dead-bell geid,[3]
It cry'd, Woe to Barbara Allan!

9. "O mother, mother, make my bed!
O make it saft and narrow!
Since my love died for me to-day,
I'll die for him to-morrow."

YOUNG WATERS

1. About Yule, when the wind blew cule,
And the round tables began,[4]
A there is cum to our king's court
Mony a well-favord man.

2. The queen luikt owre the castle-wa,
Beheld baith dale and down,
And there she saw Young Waters
Cum riding to the town.

3. His footmen they did rin[5] before,
His horsemen rade behind;
And mantel of the burning gowd
Did keip him frae the wind.

4. Gowden-graithd[6] his horse before,
And siller-shod behind;
The horse Young Waters rade upon
Was fleeter than the wind.

5. Out then spack a wylie lord,
Unto the queen said he,
"O tell me wha's the fairest face
Rides in the company?"

6. "I've sene lord, and I've sene laird,
And knights of high degree,
Bot a fairer face than Young Waters
Mine eyne did never see."

7. Out then spack the jealous king,
And an angry man was he:
"O if he had bin twice as fair,
You micht have excepted me."

8. "You're neither laird nor lord," she says,
"Bot the king that wears the crown;
There is not a knight in fair Scotland
But to thee maun bow down."

9. For a' that she coud do or say,
Appeasd he wad nae bee,
Bot for the words which she had said,
Young Waters he maun die.

10. They hae taen Young Waters,
And put fetters to his feet;
They hae taen Young Waters,
And thrown him in dungeon deep.

[1] death-bell
[2] stroke
[3] gave
[4] Assemblies of knights for tournaments and feasts in imitation of Arthur's Round Table.
[5] run
[6] shod with gold

11. "Aft I have ridden thro Stirling town
In the wind bot and [1] the weit; [2]
But I neir rade thro Stirling town
Wi fetters at my feet.

12. "Aft I have ridden thro Stirling town
In the wind bot and the rain;
Bot I neir rade thro Stirling town
Neir to return again."

13. They hae taen to the heiding-hill [3]
His young son in his craddle,
And they hae taen to the heiding-hill
His horse bot and his saddle.

14. They hae taen to the heiding-hill
His lady fair to see,
And for the words the queen had spoke
Young Waters he did die.

THE GAY GOSS-HAWK [4]

1. "O well's me o my gay goss-hawk,
That he can speak and flee;
He'll carry a letter to my love,
Bring back another to me."

2. "O how can I your true-love ken,
Or how can I her know?
Whan frae her mouth I never heard couth,[5]
Nor wi my eyes her saw."

3. "O well sal ye my true-love ken,
As soon as you her see;
For, of a' the flowrs in fair Englan,
The fairest flowr is she.

4. "At even at my love's bowr-door
There grows a bowing birk,[6]
An sit ye down and sing thereon,
As she gangs to the kirk.

5. "An four-and-twenty ladies fair
Will wash and go to kirk,
But well shall ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her skirt.

6. "An four and twenty gay ladies
Will to the mass repair,
But well sal ye my true-love ken,
For she wears goud on her hair."

7. O even at that lady's bowr-door
There grows a bowin birk,
An he set down and sang thereon,
As she ged [7] to the kirk.

8. "O eet and drink, my marys [8] a',
The wine flows you among,
Till I gang to my shot-window,[9]
An hear yon bonny bird's song.

9. "Sing on, sing on, my bonny bird,
The song ye sang the streen,[10]
For I ken by your sweet singin
You're frae my true-love sen."

10. O first he sang a merry song,
An then he sang a grave,
An then he peckd his feathers gray,
To her the letter gave.

11. "Ha, there's a letter frae your love,
He says he sent you three;
He canna wait your love langer,
But for your sake he'll die.

12. "He bids you write a letter to him:
He says he's sent you five;
He canno wait your love langer,
Tho you're the fairest woman alive."

13. "Ye bid him bake his bridal-bread,
And brew his bridal-ale,
An I'll meet him in fair Scotlan
Lang, lang or it be stale."

[1] and also (but and)
[2] wet
[3] place of execution
[4] A large short-winged hawk or falcon.
[5] sound
[6] birch
[7] went
[8] maids
[9] bay-window; hinged window
[10] yesterday evening

14. She's doen her to her father dear,
Fa'n low down on her knee:
"A boon, a boon, my father dear,
I pray you, grant it me."

15. "Ask on, ask on, my daughter,
An granted it sal be;
Except ae squire in fair Scotlan,
An him you sall never see."

16. "The only boon, my father dear,
That I do crave of the,
Is, gin I die in southin [1] lands,
In Scotland to bury me.

17. "An the firstin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that ye come till,
Ye gar the mess be sung.

18. "An the thirdin kirk that ye come till,
You deal gold for my sake,
An the fourthin kirk that ye come till,
You tarry there till night."

19. She is doen her to her bigly [2] bowr,
As fast as she coud fare,
An she has tane a sleepy draught,
That she had mixed wi care.

20. She's laid her down upon her bed,
An soon she's fa'n asleep,
And soon oer every tender limb
Cauld death began to creep.

21. Whan night was flown, an day was come,
Nae ane that did her see
But thought she was as surely dead
As ony lady coud be.

22. Her father an her brothers dear
Gard [3] make to her a bier;
The tae half was o guide red gold,
The tither o silver clear.

23. Her mither an her sisters fair
Gard work for her a sark; [4]
The tae half was o cambrick fine,
The tither o needle wark.

24. The firstin kirk that they came till,
They gard the bells be rung,
An the nextin kirk that they came till,
They gard the mess be sung.

25. The thirdin kirk that they came till,
They dealt gold for her sake,
An the fourthin kirk that they came till,
Lo, there they met her make!

26. "Lay down, lay down the bigly bier.
Let me the dead look on;"
Wi cherry cheeks and ruby lips
She lay an smil'd on him.

27. "O ae sheave [5] o your bread, true love,
An ae glass o your wine,
For I hae fasted for your sake
These fully days is nine.

28. "Gang hame, gang hame, my seven bold brothers,
Gang hame and sound your horn;
An ye may boast in southin lans
Your sister's playd you scorn."

ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE

1. When shawes [6] beene sheene, [7] and shradds [8] full fayre,
And leeves both large and longe,
Itt is merry, walking in the fayre fforrest,
To heare the small birds songe.

[1] southern
[2] commodious
[3] caused, "had"
[4] shirt
[5] slice
[6] woods
[7] beautiful
[8] twigs

2. The woodweele [1] sang, and wold not cease,
Amongst the leaves a lyne: [2]
And it is by two wight [3] yeomen,
By deare God, *that* I meane.

* * * * * * *

3. "Me thought they did mee beate and binde,
And tooke my bow mee froe;
If I bee Robin a-live in this lande,
I'le be wrocken on both them towe."

4. "Sweavens are swift, *master*," q*uo*th John
"As the wind *that* blowes ore a hill;
Ffor if itt be nev*er* soe lowde this night,
To-morrow it may be still."

5. "Buskee yee, bowne yee, my merry men all.
Ffor John shall goe with mee;
For I'le goe seeke yond wight yeomen
In greenwood where the bee."

6. The cast on their gowne of greene,
A shooting gone are they,
Untill they came to the merry greenwood,
Where they had gladdest bee;
There were the ware of [a] wight yeoman,
His body leaned to a tree.

7. A sword and a dagger he wore by his side,
Had beene many a mans bane,
And he was cladd in his capull-hyde,[4]
Topp, and tayle, and mayne.

8. "Stand you still, m*aster*," q*uo*th Litle John,
"Under this trusty tree,
And I will goe to yond wight yeoman,
To know his meaning trulye."

9. "A, John, by me thou setts noe store,
And *that*'s a ffarley [5] thinge;
How offt send I my men beffore,
And tarry my-selfe behinde?

10. "It is noe cunning a knaue to ken,
And a man but heare him speake;
And itt were not for bursting of my bowe,
John, I wold thy head breake."

11. But often words they breeden bale,
T*hat* p*ar*ted Robin and John;
John is gone to Barn[e]sdale,
The gates he knowes eche one.

12. And when hee came to Barnesdale,
Great heavinesse there hee hadd;
He ffound two of his fellowes
Were slaine both in a slade.[6]

13. And Scarlett a ffoote flyinge was,
Ov*er* stockes and stone,
For the sheriffe with seven score men
Fast after him is gone.

14. "Yett one shoote I'le shoote," sayes Litle John,
"W*i*th Crist his might and mayne;
I'le make yond fellow *that* flyes soe fast
To be both glad and ffaine."

15. John bent up a good viewe [7] bow,
And ffetteled him to shoote;
The bow was made of a tender boughe,
And fell downe to his foote.

[1] woodpecker
[2] leaves of lindens
[3] strong
[4] horsehide
[5] strange
[6] glade
[7] yew

16. "Woe worth thee, wicked wood,"
sayd Litle John,
"*That* ere thou grew on a tree!
Ffor this day thou art my bale,
My boote when thou shold bee!"

17. This shoote it was but looselye shott,
The arrowe flew in vaine,
And it mett one of the sheriffes men;
Good *William* a Trent was slaine.

18. It had beene better for *William* a Trent
To hange vpon a gallowe
Then for to lye in the greenwoode,
There slaine *with* an arrowe.

19. And it is sayd, when men be mett,
Six can doe more then three:
And they have tane Litle John,
And bound him ffast to a tree.

20. "Thou shalt be drawen by dale and downe," q*uo*th the sheriffe,
"And hanged hye on a hill:"
"But thou may ffayle," q*uo*th Litle John,
"If itt be Christs owne will."

21. Let us leave talking of Litle John,
For hee is bound fast to a tree,
And talke of Guy and Robin Hood,
In the green woode where they bee.

22. How these two yeomen together they mett,
Under the leaves of lyne,
To see what marchandise they made
Even at that same time.

23. "Good morrow, good fellow," q*uo*th Sir Guy;
"Good morrow, good ffellow," q*uo*th hee;
"Methinkes by this bow thou beares in thy hand,
A good archer thou seems to bee."

24. "I am wilfull of my way," q*uo*th Sir Guye,
"And of my morning tyde:"
"I'le lead thee through the wood," q*uo*th Robin,
"Good ffellow, I'le be thy guide."

25. "I seeke an outlaw," q*uo*th Sir Guye,
"Men call him Robin Hood;
I had rather meet *with* him upon a day
Then forty pound of golde."

26. If you tow mett, itt wold be seene whether were better
Afore yee did p*art* awaye;
Let us some other pastime find,
Good ffellow, I thee pray.

27. "Let us some other masteryes[1] make,
And wee will walke in the woods even;
Wee may chance mee[t] *with* Robin Hoode
Att some unsett steven."[2]

28. They cutt them downe the sum*m*er shroggs[3]
*Whi*ch grew both under a bryar,
And sett them three score rood in twinn,
To shoote the prickes[4] full neare.

29. "Leade on, good ffellow," sayd Sir Guye,
"Lead on, I doe bidd thee:"
"Nay, by my faith," q*uo*th Robin Hood,
"The leader thou shalt bee."

30. The first good shoot *tha*t Robin ledd
Did not shoote an inch the pricke ffroe;
Guy was an archer good enoughe,
But he cold neere shoote soe.

[1] feats of skill
[2] unappointed time
[3] wands
[4] wand to shoot at

31. The second shoote Sir Guy shott,
He shott within the garlande; [1]
But Robin Hoode shott it better then hee,
For he clove the good prickewande.

32. "Gods blessing on thy heart;" sayes Guye
"Goode ffellow, thy shooting is goode;
For an thy hart be as good as thy hands,
Thou were better then Robin Hood.

33. "Tell me thy name, good ffellow," quoth Guy,
"Under the leaves of lyne":
"Nay, by my faith," quoth good Robin,
"Till thou have told me thine."

34. "I dwell by dale and downe," quoth Guye,
"And I have done many a curst turne;
And he that calles me by my right name
Calles me Guye of good Gysborne."

35. "My dwelling is in the wood," sayes Robin;
"By thee I set right nought;
My name is Robin Hood of Barnesdale,
A ffellow thou has long sought."

36. He that had neither beene a kithe nor kin
Might have seene a full fayre sight,
To see how together these yeomen went,
With blades both browne and bright.

37. To have seene how these yeomen together foug[ht],
Two howers of a summers day;
Itt was neither Guy nor Robin Hood
That ffettled [2] them to flye away.

38. Robin was reacheles on [3] a roote,
And stumbled at that tyde,
And Guy was quicke and nimble withall,
And hitt him ore the left side.

39. "Ah, deere Lady!" sayd Robin Hoode,
"Thou art both mother and may!
I thinke it was never mans destinye
To dye before his day."

40. Robin thought on Our Lady deere,
And soone leapt up againe,
And thus he came with an awkwarde stroke;
Good Sir Guy hee has slayne.

41. He tooke Sir Guys head by the hayre,
And sticked itt on his bowes end:
"Thou hast beene traytor all thy liffe,
Which thing must have an ende."

42. Robin pulled forth an Irish kniffe,
And nicked Sir Guy in the fface,
That hee was never on a woman borne
Cold tell who Sir Guye was.

43. Saies, "Lye there, lye there, good Sir Guye,
And with me be not wrothe;
If thou have had the worse stroakes at my hand,
Thou shalt have the better cloathe."

[1] Presumably around the wand.

[2] prepared

[3] careless of

44. Robin did off his gowne of greene,
Sir Guy hee did it throwe;
And hee put on *that* capull-hyde,
That cladd him topp to toe.

45. "The bowe, the arrowes, and litle horne,
And with me now I'le beare;
Ffor now I will goe to Barn[e]sdale,
To see how my men doe ffare."

46. Robin sett Guyes horne to his mouth,
A lowd blast in it he did blow;
That beheard the sheriffe of Nottingham,
As he leaned under a lowe.[1]

47. "Hearken! hearken!" sayd the sheriffe,
"I heard noe tydings but good;
For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne blowe,
For he hath slaine Robin Hoode.

48. "For yonder I heare Sir Guyes horne blow,
Itt blowes soe well in tyde,
For yonder comes *that* wighty yeoman,
Cladd in his capull-hyde.

49. "Come hither, thou good Sir Guy,
Aske of mee what thou wilt have":
"I'le none of thy gold," sayes Robin Hood,
"Nor I'le none of itt have.

50. "But now I have slaine the *master*," he sayd,
"Let me goe strike the knave;
This is all the reward I aske,
Nor noe other will I have."

51. "Thou art a madman," said the shiriffe,
"Thou sholdest have had a knights ffee;
Seeing thy asking [hath] beene soe badd,
Well granted it shall be."

52. But Litle John heard his *master* speake,
Well he knew *that* was his steven;[2]
"Now shall I be loset," q*uo*th Litle John,
"With Christs might in heaven."

53. But Robin hee hyed him towards Litle John,
Hee thought hee wold loose him belive;[3]
The sheriffe and all his companye
Fast after him did drive.

54. "Stand abacke! stand abacke!" sayd Robin;
"Why draw you mee soe neere?
Itt was never the use in our countrye
One's shrift another shold heere."

55. But Robin pulled forth an Irysh kniffe,
And losed John hand and ffoote,
And gave him Sir Guyes bow in his hand,
And bade it be his boote.

56. But John tooke Guyes bow in his hand—
His arrowes were rawstye by the roote—
The sheriffe saw Litle John draw a bow
And ffettle him to shoote.

57. Towards his house in Nottingam
He ffled full fast away,
And soe did all his companye,
Not one behind did stay.

[1] hill [2] voice [3] quickly

58. But he cold neither soe fast goe,
Nor away soe fast runn,
But Litle John, with an arrow broade,
Did cleave his heart in twinn.

ROBIN HOOD AND ALLEN A DALE

1. Come listen to me, you gallants so free,
All you that loves mirth for to hear,
And I will you tell of a bold outlaw,
That lived in Nottinghamshire. (*bis.*)

2. As Robin Hood in the forrest stood,
All under the green-wood tree,
There was he ware of a brave young man,
As fine as fine might be.

3. The youngster was clothed in scarlet red,
In scarlet fine and gay,
And he did frisk it over the plain,
And chanted a roundelay.

4. As Robin Hood next morning stood,
Amongst the leaves so gay,
There did he espy the same young man
Come drooping along the way.

5. The scarlet he wore the day before,
It was clean cast away;
And every step he fetcht a sigh,
"Alack and a well a day!"

6. Then stepped forth brave Little John,
And Nick the millers son,
Which made the young man bend his bow,
When as he see them come.

7. "Stand off, stand off," the young man said,
"What is your will with me?"
"You must come before our master straight,
Under yon green-wood tree."

8. And when he came bold Robin before,
Robin askt him courteously,
"O hast thou any money to spare
For my merry men and me?"

9. "I have no money," the young man said,
"But five shillings and a ring;
And that I have kept this seven long years,
To have it at my wedding.

10. "Yesterday I should have married a maid,
But she is now from me tane,
And chosen to be an old knights delight,
Whereby my poor heart is slain."

11. "What is thy name?" then said Robin Hood,
"Come tell me, without any fail:"
"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
"My name it is Allin a Dale."

12. "What wilt thou give me," said Robin Hood,
"In ready gold or fee,
To help thee to thy true-love again,
And deliver her unto thee?"

13. "I have no, money," then quoth the young man,
"No ready gold nor fee,
But I will swear upon a book
Thy true servant for to be."

14. "How many miles is it to thy true-love?
Come tell me without any guile:"
"By the faith of my body," then said the young man,
"It is but five little mile."

15. Then Robin he hasted over the plain,
He did neither stint nor lin,[1]
Until he came unto the church
Where Allin should keep his wedding.

16. "What dost thou do here?" the bishop he said,
"I prethee now tell to me:"
"I am a bold harper," quoth Robin Hood,
"And the best in the north countrey."

17. "O welcome, O welcome," the bishop he said,
"That musick best pleaseth me;"
"You shall have no musick," quoth Robin Hood,
"Till the bride and the bridegroom I see."

18. With that came in a wealthy knight,
Which was both grave and old,
And after him a finikin[2] lass,
Did shine like glistering gold.

19. "This is no fit match," quoth bold Robin Hood,
"That you do seem to make here;
For since we are come unto the church,
The bride she shall chuse her own dear."

20. Then Robin Hood put his horn to his mouth,
And blew blasts two or three;
When four and twenty bowmen bold
Came leaping over the lee.

21. And when they came into the churchyard,
Marching all on a row,
The first man was Allin a Dale,
To give bold Robin his bow.

22. "This is thy true-love," Robin he said,
"Young Allin, as I hear say;
And you shall be married at this same time,
Before we depart away."

23. "That shall not be," the bishop he said,
"For thy word shall not stand;
They shall be three times askt in the church,
As the law is of our land."

24. Robin Hood pulld off the bishops coat,
And put it upon Little John;
"By the faith of my body," then Robin said,
"This cloath doth make thee a man."

25. When Little John went into the quire,
The people began for to laugh;
He askt them seven times in the church,
Least three times should not be enough.

26. "Who gives me this maid?" then said Little John;
Quoth Robin, "That do I,
And he that doth take her from Allin a Dale
Full dearly he shall her buy."

27. And thus having ended this merry wedding,
The bride lookt as fresh as a queen,
And so they returned to the merry green wood,
Amongst the leaves so green.

[1] pause nor stop [2] fine; elaborately dressed

ROBIN HOOD RESCUING THE WIDOW'S THREE SONS

1. There are twelve months in all the year,
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year
Is the merry month of May.

2. Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met a silly old woman,
Was weeping on the way.

3. "What news? what news, thou silly old woman?
What news hast thou for me?"
Said she, "There's three squires in Nottingham town
To-day is condemned to die."

4. "O have they parishes burnt?" he said,
"Or have they ministers slain?
Or have they robbed any virgin,
Or with other men's wives have lain?"

5. "They have no parishes burnt, good sir,
Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have lain."

6. "O what have they done?" said bold Robin Hood,
"I pray thee tell to me":
"It's for slaying of the king's fallow deer,
Bearing their long bows with thee."

7. "Dost thou not mind, old woman," he said,
"Since thou made me sup and dine?
By the truth of my body," quoth bold Robin Hood,
"You could not tell it in better time."

8. Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met with a silly old palmer,[1]
Was walking along the highway.

9. "What news? what news, thou silly old man?
What news, I do thee pray?"
Said he, "Three squires in Nottingham town
Are condemnd to die this day."

10. "Come change thy apparel with me, old man,
Come change thy apparel for mine;
Here is forty shillings in good silver,
Go drink it in beer or wine."

11. "O thine apparel is good," he said,
"And mine is ragged and torn;
Whereever you go, wherever you ride,
Laugh neer an old man to scorn."

12. "Come change thy apparel with me, old churl,
Come change thy apparel with mine;
Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,
Go feast thy brethren with wine."

13. Then he put on the old man's hat,
It stood full high on the crown:

[1] pilgrim, beggar

"The first bold bargain [1] that I come at,
It shall make thee come down."

14. Then he put on the old man's cloak,
Was patched black, blew, and red;
He thought no shame all the day long
To wear the bags of bread.

15. Then he put on the old man's breeks,[2]
Was patchd from ballup [3] to side;
"By the truth of my body," bold Robin can say,
"This man lovd little pride."

16. Then he put on the old man's hose,
Were patched from knee to wrist;
"By the truth of my body," said bold Robin Hood,
"I'd laugh if I had any list."

17. Then he put on the old man's shoes,
Were patchd both beneath and aboon;
Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
"It's good habit that makes a man."

18. Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a down,
And there he met with the proud sheriff,
Was walking along the town.

19. "O save, O save, O sheriff," he said,
"O save, and you may see!
And what will you give to a silly old man
To-day will your hangman be?"

20. "Some suits, some suits," the sheriff he said,
"Some suits I'll give to thee;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thirteen
To-day's a hangman's fee."

21. Then Robin he turns him round about,
And jumps from stock to stone;
"By the truth of my body," the sheriff he said,
"That's well jumpt, thou nimble old man."

22. "I was neer a hangman in all my life,
Nor yet intends to trade;
But curst be he," said bold Robin,
"That first a hangman was made,

23. "I've a bag for meal, and a bag for malt,
And a bag for barley and corn;
A bag for bread, and a bag for beef,
And a bag for my little small horn.

24. "I have a horn in my pocket,
I got it from Robin Hood,
And still when I set it to my mouth,
For thee it blows little good."

25. "O wind thy horn, thou proud fellow,
Of thee I have no doubt; [4]
I wish that thou give such a blast
Till both thy eyes fall out."

26. The first loud blast that he did blow,
He blew both loud and shrill;
A hundred and fifty of Robin Hood's men
Came riding over the hill.

27. The next loud blast that he did give,
He blew both loud and amain,

[1] fight
[2] breeches
[3] front
[4] fear

And quickly sixty of Robin Hood's men
Came shining over the plain.

28. "O who are yon," the sheriff he said,
"Come tripping over the lee?"
"The're my attendants," brave Robin did say,
"They'll pay a visit to thee."

29. They took the gallows from the slack,[1]
They set it in the glen,
They hangd the proud sheriff on that,
Released their own three men.

THE HUNTING OF THE CHEVIOT [2]

1. The Persë owt off Northombarlonde, and avowe to God mayd he
That he wold hunte in the mountayns
off Chyviat within days thre,
In the magger of [3] doughtë Dogles, and all that ever with him be.

2. The fattiste hartes in all Cheviat he sayd he wold kyll, and cary them away:
"Be my feth," sayd the dougheti Doglas agayn,
"I wyll let [4] that hontyng yf that I may."

3. The[n] the Persë owt off Banborowe cam,
with him a myghtee meany,[5]
With fifteen hondrith archares bold off blood and bone;
the wear chosen owt of shyars thre.

4. This began on a Monday at morn,
in Cheviat the hillys so he; [6]
The chylde may rue that ys un-born, it wos the mor pittë.

5. The dryvars thorowe the woodes went,
for to reas [7] the dear;
Bomen byckarte [8] uppone the bent [9] with ther browd aros cleare.

6. Then the wyld [10] thorowe the woodës went,
on every sydë shear; [11]
Greahondes thorowe the grevis glent,[12]
for to kyll thear dear.

7. This begane in Chyviat the hyls abone,
yerly [13] on a Monnyn-day;
Be that it drewe to the oware off none,
a hondrith fat hartës ded ther lay.

8. The blewe a mort [14] uppone the bent,
the semblyde on sydis shear;
To the quyrry [15] then the Persë went,
to se the bryttlynge [16] off the deare.

9. He sayd, It was the Duglas promys this day to met me hear;
But I wyste he wolde faylle, verament; [17]
a great oth the Persë swear.

10. At the laste a squyar off Northomberlonde
lokyde at his hand full ny;
He was war a the doughetie Doglas commynge,
with him a myghttë meany.

[1] space between hills
[2] Cheviot Hills are between England and Scotland.
[3] in spite of
[4] hinder
[5] company
[6] high
[7] raise
[8] attacked (the deer)
[9] field
[10] game
[11] separate
[12] groves darted
[13] early
[14] note on horn
[15] quarry, slaughtered game
[16] quartering
[17] truly

11. Both with spear, bylle, and brande,
yt was a myghtti sight to se;
Hardyar men, both off hart nor hande,
wear not in Cristiantë.

12. The wear twenti hondrith spear-men good,
withoute any feale;
The wear borne along be the watter a Twyde,
yth bowndës of Tividale.

13. "Leave of the brytlyng of the dear," he sayd,
"and to your boys [1] lock ye tayk good hede;
For never sithe ye wear on your mothars borne
had ye never so mickle nede."

14. The dougheti Dogglas on a stede,
he rode alle his men beforne;
His armor glytteryde as dyd a glede;
a boldar barne was never born.

15. "Tell me whos men ye ar," he says,
"or whos men that ye be:
Who gave youe leave to hunte in this Chyviat chays,
in the spyt of myn and of me."

16. The first mane that ever him an answear mayd,
yt was the good lord Persë:
"We wyll not tell the whoys men we ar," he says,
"nor whos men that we be;
But we wyll hounte hear in this chays,
in the spyte of thyne and of the.

17. "The fattiste hartës in all Chyviat we have kyld, and cast [2] to carry them away:"

"Be my troth," sayd the doughetë Dogglas agayn,
"therfor the ton of us shall de [3] this day."

18. Then sayd the doughtë Doglas unto the lord Persë:
"To kyll alle thes giltles men,
alas, it wear great pittë!

19. "But, Persë, thowe art a lord of lande,
I am a yerle callyd within my contrë;
Let all our men uppone a parti stande,
and do the battell off the and of me."

20. "Nowe Cristes cors on his crowne," sayd the lord Persë,
"who-so-ever ther-to says nay!
Be my troth, doughttë Doglas," he says,
"thow shalt never se that day.

21. "Nethar in Ynglonde, Skottlonde, nar France,
nor for no man of a woman born,
But, and [4] fortune be my chance,
I dar met him, on man for on." [5]

22. Then bespayke a squyar off North-ombarlonde,
Richard Wytharyngton was his nam;
"It shall never be told in Sothe-Ynglonde," he says,
"To Kyng Herry the Fourth for sham.

23. "I wat youe byn great lordës twaw,
I am a poor squyar of lande;
I wylle never se my captayne fyght on a fylde,

[1] bows
[2] intend
[3] one of us shall die
[4] if
[5] one man for one

and stande my selffe and loocke on,
But whylle I may my weppone welde,
I wylle not [fayle] both hart and hande."

24. That day, that day, that dredfull day!
the first fit here I fynde;
And youe wyll here any mor a the hountynge a the Chyviat,
yet ys ther mor behynde.

25. The Yngglyshe men hade ther bowys yebent,
ther hartes wer good yenoughe;
The first off arros that the shote off,
seven skore spear-men the sloughe.

26. Yet byddys the yerle Doglas uppon the bent,
a captayne good yenoughe,
And that was sene verament,
for he wrought hom both woo and wouche.[1]

27. The Dogglas partyd his ost in thre,
lyk a cheffe cheften off pryde;
With suar [2] spears off myghttë tre,
the cum in on every syde;

28. Thrughe our Yngglyshe archery
gave many a wounde fulle wyde;
Many a doughetë the garde [3] to dy,
which ganyde them no pryde.

29. The Yngglyshe men let ther boys be,
and pulde owt brandes [4] that wer brighte;
It was a hevy syght to se
bryght swordes on basnites [5] lyght.

[1] harm
[2] sure
[3] they caused
[4] swords
[5] helmets

30. Thorowe ryche male and myneyeple,[6]
many sterne [7] the strocke done [8] streght;
many a freyke [9] that was fully fre,
ther undar foot dyd lyght.

31. At last the Duglas and the Persë met,
lyk to captayne of myght and of mayne;
The swapte together tylle the both swat,
with swordes that wear of fyn myllan.[10]

32. Thes worthë freckys for to fyght,
ther-to the wear fulle fayne,
Tylle the bloode owte off thear basnetes sprente,[11]
as ever dyd heal or rayn.

33. "Yelde the, Persë," sayde the Doglas,
"and i feth I shalle the brynge
Wher thowe shalte have a yerls wagis
of Jamy our Skottish kynge.

34. "Thoue shalte have thy ransom fre,
I hight [12] the hear this thinge;
For the manfullyste man yet art thowe
that ever I conqueryd in filde fighttynge."

35. "Nay," sayd the lord Persë,
"I tolde it the beforne,
That I wolde never yeldyde be
to no man of a woman born."

36. What that ther cam an arrowe hastely,
forthe off a myghttë wane; [13]
Hit hathe strekene the yerle Duglas in at the brest-bane.

[6] gauntlet(?)
[7] bold one
[8] they struck down
[9] man
[10] Milan steel
[11] spurted
[12] promise
[13] number(?)

37. Thorowe lyvar and longës bathe
the sharpe arrowe ys gane,
That never after in all his lyffe-days
he spayke mo wordës but ane:
That was, Fyghte ye, my myrry men, whyllys ye may,
for my lyff-days ben gan.

38. The Persë leanyde on his brande,
and sawe the Duglas de;
He tooke the dede mane by the hande,
and sayd, "Wo ys me for the!

39. "To have savyde thy lyffe, I wolde have partyde with
my landes for years thre,
For a better man, of hart nare of hande,
was nat in all the north contrë."

40. Off all that se[1] a Skottishe knyght,
was callyd Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry;
He sawe the Duglas to the deth was dyght,
he spendyd a spear, a trusti tre.

41. He rod uppone a corsiare
throughe a hondrith archery:
He never stynttyde,[2] nar never blane,[3]
tylle he cam to the good lord Persë.

42. He set uppone the lorde Persë
a dynte that was full soare;
With a suar spear of a myghttë tre
clean thorow the body he the Persë ber,

43. A the tothar syde that a man myght se
a large cloth-yard and mare:
Towe bettar captayns wear nat in Cristiantë
then that day slan wear ther.

44. An archar off Northomberlonde
say slean was the lord Persë;
He bar a bende bowe in his hand,
was made off trusti tre.

45. An arow that a cloth-yarde was lang
to the harde stele halyde he;
A dynt that was both sad and soar
he sat on Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry.

46. The dynt yt was both sad and sar
that he of Monggomberry sete;
The swane-fethars that his arrowe bar
with his hart-blood the wear wete.

47. Ther was never a freake wone foot wolde fle,
but still in stour[4] dyd stand,
Heawyng on yche othar, whylle the myghte dre,[5]
with many a balfull brande.

48. This battell began in Chyviat
an owar befor the none,
And when even-songe bell was rang,
the battell was nat half done.

49. The tocke [off] on ethar hande
be the lyght off the mone;
Many hade no strenght for to stande,
in Chyviat the hillys abon.

50. Of fifteen hondrith archars of Ynglonde
went away but seventi and thre;
Of twenti hondrith spear-men of Skotlonde,
but even five and fifti.

[1] saw
[2] ceased
[3] stopped
[4] battle
[5] they might endure

51. But all wear slayne Cheviat within;
the hade no strengthe to stand on by;
The chylde may rue that ys unborne,
it was the mor pittë.

52. Thear was slayne, withe the lord Persë,
Ser Johan of Agerstone,
Ser Rogar, the hinde Hartly,
Ser Wyllyam, the bolde Hearone.

53. Ser Jorg, the worthë Loumle,
a knyghte of great renowen,
Ser Raff, the ryche Rugbe,
with dyntes wear beaten dowene.

54. For Wetharrygton my harte was wo,
that ever he slayne shulde be;
For when both his leggis wear hewyne in to,
yet he knyled and fought on hys kny.

55. Ther was slayne, with the dougheti Duglas,
Ser Hewe the Monggombyrry,
Ser Davy Lwdale, that worthë was,
his sistars son was he.

56. Ser Charls a Murrë in that place,
that never a foot wolde fle;
Ser Hewe Maxwelle, a lorde he was,
with the Doglas dyd he dey.

57. So on the morrowe the mayde them byears
off birch and hasell[1] so gray;
Many wedous, with wepyng tears,
cam to fache ther makys away.

58. Tivydale may carpe off care,[2]
Northombarlond may mayk great mon,
For towe such captayns as slayne wear thear
on the March-parti[3] shall never be non.

59. Word ys commen to Eddenburrowe,
to Jamy the Skottishe kynge,
That dougheti Duglas, lyff-tenant of the Marches,
he lay slean Chyviot within.

60. His handdës dyd he weal[4] and wryng,
he sayd, Alas, and woe ys me!
Such an othar captayn Skotland within,
he sayd, ye-feth shuld never be.

61. Worde ys commyn to lovly Londone,
till the fourth Harry our kynge,
That lord Persë, leyff-tenante of the Marchis,
he lay slayne Chyviat within.

62. "God have merci on his solle," sayde Kyng Harry,
"good lord, yf thy will it be!
I have a hondrith captayns in Ynglonde," he sayd,
"as good as ever was he:
But, Persë, and I brook[5] my lyffe,
thy deth well quyte shall be."

63. As our noble kynge mayd his avowe,
lyke a noble prince of renowen,
For the deth of the lord Persë
he dyde the battell of Hombyll-down;

64. Wher syx and thirttë Skottishe knyghtes
on a day were beaten down;
Glendale glytteryde on ther armor bryght,
over castille, towar, and town.

[1] hazel
[2] talk of sorrow; lament
[3] Border
[4] wring
[5] if I enjoy

65. This was the hontynge off the Cheviat,
that tear begane this spurn; [1]
Old men that knowen the grownde well yenoughe
call it the battell of Otterburn.

66. At Otterburn begane this spurne,
uppone a Monnynday;
Ther was the doughtë Doglas slean,
the Persë never went away.

67. Ther was never a tym on the Marche-partës
sen the Doglas and the Persë met,
But yt ys mervele and the rede blude ronne not,
as the reane doys in the stret.

68. Ihesue Crist our balys bete,[2]
and to the blys us brynge!
Thus was the hountynge of the Chivyat:
God send us alle good endyng!

JOHNIE ARMSTRONG

1. There dwelt a man in faire Westmerland,
Jonnë Armestrong men did him call,
He had nither lands nor rents coming in,
Yet he kept eight score men in his hall.

2. He had horse and harness for them all,
Goodly steeds were all milke-white;
O the golden bands an about their necks,
And their weapons, they were all alike.

3. Newes then was brought unto the king
That there was sicke [3] a won as hee,
That livëd lyke a bold out-law,
And robbëd all the north country.

4. The king he writt an a letter then,
A letter which was large and long;
He signëd it with his owne hand,
And he promised to doe him no wrong.

5. When this letter came Jonnë untill,
His heart it was as blythe as birds on the tree:
"Never was I sent for before any king,
My father, my grandfather, nor none but mee.

6. "And if wee goe the king before,
I would we went most orderly;
Every man of you shall have his scarlet cloak,
Laced with silver laces three.

7. "Every won of you shall have his velvett coat,
Laced with sillver lace so white;
O the golden bands an about your necks,
Black hatts, white feathers, all alyke."

8. By the morrow morninge at ten of the clock,
Towards Edenburough gon was hee,
And with him all his eight score men;
Good lord, it was a goodly sight for to see!

9. When Jonnë came befower the king,
He fell downe on his knee;

[1] The meaning is not clear
[2] relieve
[3] such

"O pardon, my soveraine leige," he said,
"O pardon my eight score men and mee!"

10. "Thou shalt have no pardon, thou traytor strong,
For thy eight score men nor thee;
For to-morrow morning by ten of the clock,
Both thou and them shall hang on the gallow-tree."

11. But Jonnë looked over his left shoulder,
Good Lord, what a grevious look looked hee!
Saying, "Asking grace of a graceles face—
Why there is none for you nor me."

12. But Jonnë had a bright sword by his side,
And it was made of the mettle so free,
That had not the king stept his foot aside,
He had smitten his head from his faire boddë.

13. Saying, "Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine;
For rather then men shall say we were hange'd,
Let them report how we were slaine."

14. Then, God wott, faire Eddenburrough rose,
And so besett poore Jonnë rounde,
That fowerscore and tenn of Jonnës best men
Lay gasping all upon the ground.

15. Then like a mad man Jonnë laide about,
And like a mad man then fought hee,
Untill a falce Scot came Jonnë behinde,
And runn him through the faire boddee.

16. Saying, "Fight on, my merry men all,
And see that none of you be taine;
For I will stand by and bleed but awhile,
And then will I come and fight againe."

17. Newes then was brought to young Jonnë Armestrong,
As he stood by his nurses knee,
Who vowed if ere he live'd for to be a man,
O the treacherous Scots revengd hee'd be.

CAPTAIN CAR

1. It befell at Martynmas,
When wether waxed colde,
Captaine Care said to his men,
We must go take a holde.[1]

Syck, sike, and to-towe[2] sike,
And sike and like to die;
The sikest nighte that ever I abode,
God lord have mercy on me!

2. "Haille, master, and wether you will,
And wether ye like it best";
"To the castle of Crecrynbroghe,
And there we will take our reste."

3. "I knowe wher is a gay castle,
Is builded of lyme and stone;
Within their is a gay ladie,
Her lord is riden and gone."

[1] stronghold [2] too too, exceedingly

4. The ladie she lend[1] on her castle-walle,
She loked upp and downe;
There was she ware of an host of men,
Come riding to the towne.

5. "Se yow, my meri men all,
And se yow what I see?
Yonder I see a host of men,
I muse[2] who they bee."

6. She thought he had ben her wed lord,
As he comd riding home;
Then was it traitur Captaine Care,
The lord of Ester-towne.

7. They wer no soner at supper sett,
Then after said the grace,
Or Captaine Care and all his men
Wer lighte aboute the place.

8. "Gyve over thi howsse, thou lady gay,
And I will make the a bande;[3]
To-nighte thou shall ly within my armes,
To-morrowe thou shall ere[4] my lande."

9. Then bespacke the eldest sonne,
That was both whitt and redde:
"O mother dere, geve over your howsse,
Or elles we shalbe deade."

10. "I will not geve over my hous," she saithe,
"Not for feare of my lyffe;
It shalbe talked throughout the land,
The slaughter of a wyffe.

11. "Fetch me my pestilett,[5]
And charge me my gonne,
That I may shott at yonder bloddy butcher,
The lord of Easter-towne."

12. Styfly upon her wall she stode,
And lett the pellettes flee;
But then she myst the blody butcher,
And she slew other three.

13. "[I will] not geve over my hous," she saithe,
"Netheir for lord nor lowne;[6]
Nor yet for traitour Captaine Care,
The lord of Easter-towne.

14. "I desire of Captine Care,
And all his bloddye band,
That he would save my eldest sonne,
The eare of all my lande."

15. "Lap him in a shete," he sayth,
"And let him downe to me,
And I shall take him in my armes,
His waran[7] shall I be."

16. The captayne sayd unto him selfe:
Wyth sped, before the rest,
He cut his tonge out of his head,
His hart out of his brest.

17. He lapt them in a handkerchef,
And knet it of knotes three,
And cast them over the castell-wall,
At that gay ladye.

18. "Fye upon the, Captayne Care,
And all thy bloddy band!
For thou hast slayne my eldest sonne,
The ayre of all my land."

19. Then bespake the youngest sonne,
That sat on the nurses knee,
Sayth, "Mother gay, geve over your house;
It smoldereth me."

[1] leaned
[2] wonder
[3] agreement
[4] become heir to
[5] pistol
[6] low fellow
[7] warrant

20. "I wold geve my gold," she saith,
"And so I wolde my ffee,
For a blaste of the westryn wind,
To dryve the smoke from thee.

21. "Fy upon the, John Hamleton,
That ever I paid the hyre!
For thou hast broken my castle-wall,
And kyndled in the ffyre."

22. The lady gate to her close parler,
The fire fell aboute her head;
She toke up her children thre,
Seth, "Babes, we are all dead."

23. Then bespake the hye steward,
That is of hye degree;
Saith, "Ladie gay, you are in close,
Wether ye fighte or flee."

24. Lord Hamleton dremd in his dream,
In Carvall where he laye,
His halle were all of fyre,
His ladie slayne or daye.[1]

25. "Busk and bowne, my mery men all,
Even and go ye with me;
For I dremd that my haal was on fyre,
My lady slayne or day."

26. He buskt him and bownd hym,
And like a worthi knighte;
And when he saw his hall burning,
His harte was no dele lighte.

27. He sett a trumpett till his mouth,
He blew as it plesd his grace;
Twenty score of Hamlentons
Was light aboute the place.

28. "Had I knowne as much yesternighte
As I do to-daye,
Captaine Care and all his men
Should not have gone so quite.

29. "Fye upon thee, Captaine Care,
And all thy blody bande!
Thou haste slayne my lady gay,
More wurth then all thy lande.

30. "If thou had ought eny ill will," he saith,
"Thou shoulde have taken my lyffe,
And haue saved my children thre,
All and my lovesome wyffe."

[1] dead

THE BONNY EARL OF MURRAY

1. Ye Highlands, and ye Lawlands,
Oh where have you been?
They have slain the Earl of Murray,
And they layd him on the green.

2. "Now wae be to thee, Huntly!
And wherefore did you sae?
I bade you bring him wi you,
But forbade you him to slay."

3. He was a braw gallant,
And he rid at the ring;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he might have been a king!

4. He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the ba;
And the bonny Earl of Murray
Was the flower amang them a'.

5. He was a braw gallant,
And he playd at the glove;
And the bonny Earl of Murray,
Oh he was the Queen's love!

6. Oh lang will his lady
Look oer the castle Down,
Eer she see the Earl of Murray
Come sounding thro the town!
Eer she, etc.

BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL

1. Hie upon Hielands,
and laigh[1] upon Tay,
Bonnie George Campbell
rode out on a day.

2. He saddled, he bridled,
and gallant rode he,
And hame cam his guid horse,
but never cam he.

3. Out cam his mother dear,
greeting[2] fu sair,
And out came his bonnie bryde,
riving her hair.

4. "The meadow lies green,
the corn is unshorn,
But bonnie George Campbell
will never return."

5. Saddled and bridled
and booted rode he,
A plume in his helmet,
A sword at his knee.

6. But toom cam his saddle,
all bloody to see,
Oh, hame cam his guid horse,
but never cam he!

THE BRAES[3] O' YARROW

1. "I dreamed a dreary dream this night,
That fills my heart wi sorrow;
I dreamed I was pouing[4] the heather green
Upon the braes of Yarrow.

2. "O true-luve mine, stay still and dine,
As ye ha done before, O;"
"O I'll be hame by hours nine,
And frae the braes of Yarrow."

3. "I dreamed a dreary dream this night,
That fills my heart wi sorrow;
I dreamed my luve came headless hame,
O frae the braes of Yarrow!

4. "O true-luve mine, stay still and dine,
As ye ha done before, O;"
"O I'll be hame by hours nine,
And frae the braes of Yarrow."

5. "O are ye going to hawke," she says,
"As ye ha done before, O?
Or are ye going to weild your brand,
Upon the braes of Yarrow?"

6. "O I am not going to hawke," he says,
"As I have done before, O,
But for to meet your brother Jhon,
Upon the braes of Yarrow.

7. As he gade down yon dowy[5] den,
Sorrow went him before, O;
Nine well-wight[6] men lay waiting him,
Upon the braes of Yarrow.

8. "I have your sister to my wife,
Ye think me an unmeet marrow;[7]
But yet one foot will I never flee
Now frae the braes of Yarrow."

9. Than four he killd and five did wound,
That was an unmeet marrow!
And he had weel nigh wan the day
Upon the braes of Yarrow.

10. Bot a cowardly loon came him behind,
Our Lady lend him sorrow!
And wi a rappier pierced his heart,
And laid him low on Yarrow.

[1] low
[2] weeping
[3] hills(ides)
[4] pulling
[5] sad, wretched
[6] strong
[7] match, mate

11. Now Douglas to his sister's gane,
Wi meikle dule and sorrow:
"Gae to your luve, sister," he says,
"He's sleeping sound on Yarrow."

12. As she went down yon dowy den,
Sorrow went her before, O;
She saw her true-love lying slain
Upon the braes of Yarrow.

13. She swoond thrice upon his breist
That was her dearest marrow;
Said, "Ever alace and wae the day
Thou wentst frae me to Yarrow!"

14. She kist his mouth, she kaimed his hair,
As she had done before, O;
She wiped the blood that trickled doun
Upon the braes of Yarrow.

15. Her hair it was three quarters lang,
It hang baith side [1] and yellow;
She tied it round her white hause-bane,[2]
And tint [3] her life on Yarrow.

THE DÆMON LOVER

1. "O where have you been, my long, long love,
This long seven years and mair?"
"O I'm come to seek my former vows
Ye granted me before."

2. "O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
For I am become a wife."

3. He turned him right and round about,
And the tear blinded his ee:
"I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
If it had not been for thee.

4. "I might hae had a king's daughter,
Far, far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
Had it not been for love o thee."

5. "If ye might have had a king's daughter,
Yersel [4] ye had to blame;
Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
For ye kend that I was nane.

6. "If I was to leave my husband dear,
And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
If with you I should go?"

7. "I hae seven ships upon the sea—
The eighth brought me to land—
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
And music on every hand."

8. She has taken up her two little babes,
Kissd them baith cheek and chin:
"O fair ye weel, my ain two babes,
For I'll never see you again."

9. She set her foot upon the ship,
No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o the taffetie,
And the masts o the beaten gold.

10. She had not sailed a league, a league,
A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
And drumlie [5] grew his ee.

11. They had not saild a league, a league,
A league but barely three,

[1] long
[2] neck-bone
[3] lost
[4] yourself
[5] sinister

Until she espied his cloven foot,
And she wept right bitterlie.

12. "O hold your tongue of your weeping," says he,
"Of your weeping now let me be;
I will shew you how the lilies grow
On the banks of Italy."

13. "O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
That the sun shines sweetly on?"
"O yon are the hills of heaven," he said,
"Where you will never win."

14. "O whaten a mountain is yon," she said,
"All so dreary wi frost and snow?"
"O yon is the mountain of hell," he cried,
"Where you and I will go."

15. He strack the tap-mast wi his hand,
The fore-mast wi his knee,
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
And sank her in the sea.

GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR

1. It fell about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was then,
When our good wife got puddings to make,
And she's boild them in the pan.

2. The wind sae could blew south and north,
And blew into the floor;
Quoth our goodman to our goodwife,
"Gae out and bar the door."

3. "My hand is in my hussyfskap,[1]
Goodman as ye may see;
An it shoud nae be barrd this hundred year,
It's no be barrd for me."

4. They made a paction[2] 'tween them twa,
They made it firm and sure,
That the first word whaeer[3] shoud speak,
Shoud rise and bar the door.

5. Then by there came two gentlemen,
At twelve o clock at night,
And they could neither see house nor hall,
Nor coal nor candle-light.

6. "Now whether is this a rich man's house,
Or whether is it a poor?"
But neer a word wad ane o them speak,
For barring of the door.

7. And first they ate the white puddings,
And then they ate the black;
Tho muckle thought the goodwife hersel,
Yet neer a word she spake.

8. Then said the one unto the other,
"Here, man, tak ye my knife;
Do ye tak aff the auld man's beard,
And I'll kiss the goodwife."

9. "But there's nae water in the house,
And what shall we do than?"
"What ails thee at the pudding-broo,
That boils into the pan?"

10. O up then started our goodman,
An angry man was he:
"Will ye kiss my wife before my een,
And scad[4] me wi pudding-bree?"

11. Then up and started our goodwife,
Gied three skips on the floor:
"Goodman, you've spoken the foremost word,
Get up and bar the door."

[1] housewifery
[2] agreement
[3] whoever
[4] scald

THE ALLEGORICAL ROMANCE: THE FAERIE QUEENE

SPENSER'S *Faerie Queene* was written for the cultured circle that surrounded Queen Elizabeth and was dedicated to the Queen, "to live with the eternitie of her fame." The poet's purpose was unquestionably to extol England by giving his country an exalted poem similar to the epics of Virgil, Ariosto, and others that had dignified Italy. It was an age of energy and enthusiasm with its share of venturesome and achieving heroes. Spenser did not, however, mirror directly contemporary events but rather chose to go back to the idealism of the days of knighthood, and, detaching them from any specific time or place, to represent through them the spiritual values of the national character. The scheme was ambitious; there were to be twelve books, each embodying one of twelve moral virtues in the person of a knight. Only six were completed.

While the fundamental purpose back of the *Faerie Queene* was of epic proportions, the poem is much closer in structure and spirit to the romances of chivalry. The background is picturesque and indefinite, despite the accuracy of line and color; it is a land of the imagination, giving none of the sense of actual place that is in the *Beowulf*. The characters are shadowy, idealized figures that can only with difficulty be kept distinct. The structure is episodic, without definite beginning or ending; and the action is of much less importance than the emotion that accompanies it or the wealth of picturesque details with which it is described. These qualities are characteristic of the romance, rather than the epic; and in view of its purpose and conception the *Faerie Queene* can perhaps best be designated as an allegorical romance.

The poem was composed while Edmund Spenser was in Ireland as secretary to the Lord Deputy of that island. His association with a race that was then living in wretched poverty and rising in insurrection showed him the need for the development of the spiritual in man. His *Faerie Queene* is an allegory; the characters not only represent virtues and vices, but also refer directly to personages of the time. It is not the high ethical quality that is valued most in the poem, however, but the imaginative qualities and its great artistry that justified Charles Lamb in calling Spenser "the poet's poet." In him are to be found the warmth and color that are of the Renaissance, a passionate love of luxuriant beauty, and a richness of fancy. He is a truly great romantic poet.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552 ?-1599)

THE FAERIE QUEENE

A Letter of the Authors,

Expounding His Whole Intention in the Course of This Worke: Which, for That It Giveth Great Light to the Reader, for the Better Understanding Is Hereunto Annexed.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE AND VALOROUS

Sir Walter Raleigh, Knight,

LORD WARDEIN OF THE STANNERYES, AND HER MAIESTIES LIEFETENAUNT OF THE COUNTY OF CORNEWAYLL.

Sir, knowing how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed, and this booke of mine, which I have entituled the Faery Queene, being a continued Allegory, or darke conceit, I haue thought good, as well for avoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof, (being so by you commanded,) to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes, or by accidents, therein occasioned. The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: Which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter then for profite of the ensample, I chose the historye of King Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspition of present time. In which I have followed all the antique Poets historicall; first Homere, who in the Persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando: and lately Tasso dissevered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in Philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo; the other named Politice in his Godfredo. By ensample of which excellente Poets, I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised; the which is the purpose of these first twelve bookes: which if I finde to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encoraged to frame the other part of polliticke vertues in his person, after that hee came to be king.

To some, I know, this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall devises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfide with the use of these dayes, seeing all things accounted by their showes, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one, in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a Commune welth, such as it should be; but the other in the person of Cyrus, and the Persians, fashioned a governement, such as might best be: So much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So haue I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure: whome I conceive, after his long

education by Timon, to whom he was by Merlin delivered to be brought up, so soone as he was borne of the Lady Igrayne, to have seene in a dream or vision the Faery Queen, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he awaking resolved to seeke her out; and so being by Merlin armed, and by Timon throughly instructed, he went to seeke her forth in Faerye land. In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet, in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautifull Lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belphœbe, fashioning her name according to your owne excellent conceipt of Cynthia, (Phœbe and Cynthia being both names of Diana.) So in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular; which vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure applyable to that vertue, which I write of in that booke. But of the xii. other vertues, I make xii. other knights the patrones, for the more variety of the history: Of which these three bookes contayn three. The first of the knight of the Redcrosse, in whome I expresse Holynes: The seconde of Sir Guyon, in whome I sette forth Temperaunce: The third of Britomartis, a Lady Knight, in whome I picture Chastity. But, because the beginning of the whole worke seemeth abrupte, and as depending upon other antecedents, it needs that ye know the occasion of these three knights seuerall adventures. For the Methode of a Poet historical is not such, as of an Historiographer. For an Historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a Poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing Analysis of all.

The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an Historiographer should be the twelfth booke, which is the last; where I devise that the Faery Queene kept her Annuall feaste xii. dayes; uppon which xii. severall dayes, the occasions of the xii. severall adventures hapned, which, being undertaken by xii. severall knights, are in these xii. books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented him selfe a tall clownishe younge man, who falling before the Queene of Faries desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that hee might have the atchievement of any adventure, which during that feaste should happen: that being graunted, he rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place. Soone after entred a faire Ladye in mourning weedes, riding on a white Asse, with a dwarfe behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the Armes of a knight, and his speare in the dwarfes hand. Shee, falling before the Queene of Faeries, complayned that her father and mother, an ancient King and Queene, had bene by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brasen Castle, who thence suffred them not to yssew; and therefore besought the Faery Queene to assygne her some one of her knights to take on him that exployt. Presently that clownish person, upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the Lady much gaine-

saying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the Lady told him, that unlesse that armour which she brought, would serve him (that is, the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul, vi. Ephes.) that he could not succeed in that enterprise; which being forthwith put upon him, with dewe furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the Lady. And eftesoones taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that straunge Courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first booke, viz.

A gentle knight was pricking on the playne. &c.

The second day ther came in a Palmer, bearing an Infant with bloody hands, whose Parents he complained to have bene slayn by an Enchaunteresse called Acrasia; and therfore craved of the Faery Queene, to appoint him some knight to performe that adventure; which being assigned to Sir Guyon, he presently went forth with that same Palmer: which is the beginning of the second booke, and the whole subject thereof. The third day there came in a Groome, who complained before the Faery Queene, that a vile Enchaunter, called Busirane, had in hand a most faire Lady, called Amoretta, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour, the lover of that Lady, presently tooke on him that adventure. But being vnable to performe it by reason of the hard Enchauntments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succoured him, and reskewed his loue.

But by occasion hereof many other adventures are intermedled; but rather as Accidents then intendments: As the love of Britomart, the overthrow of Marinell, the misery of Florimell, the vertuousness of Belphœbe, the lasciviousnes of Hellenora, and many the like.

Thus much, Sir, I have briefly overronne to direct your understanding to the wel-head of the History; that from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit, ye may as in a handfull gripe al the discourse, which otherwise may happily seeme tedious and confused. So, humbly craving the continuance of your honorable favour towards me, and th' eternall establishment of your happines, I humbly take leave.

23. Ianuary 1589,

Yours most humbly affectionate,

ED. SPENSER.

THE FIRST BOOK

OF

THE FAERIE QUEENE

CONTAINING THE LEGEND OF THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE, OR OF HOLINESSE

I

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whylome [1] did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds,[2]
Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds [3]
To blazon broade emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

[1] formerly
[2] garments. An allusion to Spenser's previous poem, *The Shepherds' Calendar.*
[3] appoints

II

Helpe then, O holy virgin! chiefe of nyne,[1]
Thy weaker Novice to performe thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne[2]
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince[3] so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong!

III

And thou, most dreaded impe[4] of highest Jove,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart;
Lay now thy deadly Heben bowe apart,
And with thy mother mylde come to mine ayde;
Come, both; and with you bring triumphant Mart,
In loves and gentle jollities arraid,
After his murdrous spoyles and bloudie rage allayd.

IV

And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly bright!
Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phœbus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted[5] stile:[6]
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest dread, a-while!

[1] Clio, the Muse of History
[2] desk
[3] Prince Arthur
[4] child

CANTO I

The Patrone of true Holinesse
Foule Errour doth defeate:
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

I

A GENTLE Knight was pricking[7] on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many' a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield.
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly[8] knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts[9] and fierce encounters fitt.

II

And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,

[5] humble
[6] pen
[7] spurring, riding fast
[8] handsome
[9] jousts

And dead, as living, ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soveraine hope which in his helpe he had.
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere [1] did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
(That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond)
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave:
And ever as he rode his hart did earne [2]
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne,
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

IV

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled [3] was full low;
And over all a blacke stole [4] shee did throw:
As one that inly mourned, so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her, in a line, a milkewhite lambe she lad.

V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;
And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kinges and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far compeld.

VI

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his Lemans [5] lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd [6] it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,

[1] countenance
[2] yearn
[3] folded
[4] robe
[5] loved one's
[6] shelter

Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr.
Faire harbour that them seems, so in they entred ar.

VIII

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can[1] they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling Pine; the Cedar proud and tall;
The vine-propp Elme; the Poplar never dry;
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all;
The Aspine good for staves; the Cypresse funerall;

IX

The Laurell, meed of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage; the Firre that weepeth still:
The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours;
The Eugh, obedient to the benders will;
The Birch for shaftes; the Sallow for the mill;
The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter wound;
The warlike Beech; the Ash for nothing ill;
The fruitfull Olive; and the Platane round;
The carver Holme;[2] the Maple seeldom inward sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustring storme is overblowne;
When, weening[3] to returne whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,
That makes them doubt their wits be not their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take in diverse doubt they been.

XI

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take that beaten seemd most bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about;
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gave.

[1] did
[2] a kind of oak
[3] thinking

XII

"Be well aware," quoth then that Ladie milde,
Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts. Oft fire is without smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your stroke,
Sir Knight, with-hold, till further tryall made."
"Ah Ladie," (sayd he) "shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light through darknesse for to wade." [1]

XIII

"Yea but" (quoth she) "the perill of this place
I better wot then you: though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisedome warnes, whilest foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forced to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this *Errours* den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read [2] beware." "Fly, fly!" (quoth then
The fearefull Dwarfe) "this is no place for living men."

XIV

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,[3]
The youthfull Knight could not for ought be staide;
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And looked in: his glistring armor made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade;
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th'other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

XV

And, as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes [4] upwound,
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,
Sucking upon her poisnous dugs; each one
Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill-favored:
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone.

XVI

Their dam upstart out of her den effraide,
And rushed forth, hurling her hideous taile
About her cursed head; whose folds displaid
Were stretcht now forth at length without entraile [5]
She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle,
Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;
For light she hated as the deadly bale,
Ay wont in desert darknes to remaine,
Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

[1] go
[2] advise
[3] hardihood
[4] folds
[5] coiling

XVII

Which when the valiant Elfe perceiv'd, he lept
As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce her speckled taile advaunst,
Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay;
Who, nought aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst: [1]
The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

XVIII

Much daunted with that dint her sence was dazd;
Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered round,
And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd
With doubled forces high above the ground:
Tho, wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd,
Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine.
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine!

XIX

His Lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, "Now, now, Sir Knight, shew what ye bee;
Add faith unto your force, and be not faint;
Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee."
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate [2] for griefe and high disdaine;
And, knitting all his force, got one hand free,
Wherewith he grypt her gorge with so great paine,
That soone to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.

XX

Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw
A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets raw,
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe.
Her vomit full of bookes and papers was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthie parbreake all the place defiled has.

XXI

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale
His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But, when his later spring gins to avale,[3]
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherin there breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly femall, of his fruitful seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elswher may no man reed.[4]

[1] raised up
[2] rise
[3] abate
[4] see

XXII

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, he can no lenger fight:
Whose corage when the feend perceivd to shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke
Her fruitful cursed spawne of serpents small,
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

XXIII

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke [1] in west,
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best;
A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
That from their noyance he no where can rest;
But with his clownish hands their tender wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

XXIV

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame
Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin; [2]
And stroke at her with more then manly force,
That from her body, full of filthie sin,
He raft [3] her hatefull heade without remorse:
A streame of cole-black blood forth gushed from her corse.

XXV

Her scattered brood, soone as their Parent deare
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare
Gathred themselves about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to have found
At her wide mouth; but being there withstood,
They flocked all about her bleeding wound,
And sucked up their dying mothers bloud,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.

XXVI

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th' unkindly Impes, of heaven accurst,
Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloudy thurst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,
And bowels gushing forth: well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life the which them nurst!
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend,
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom he should contend.

[1] go down [2] cease [3] took off

XXVII

His Lady, seeing all that chaunst from farre,
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie;
And saide, "Faire knight, borne under happie starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye,
Well worthie be you of that Armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may!"

XXVIII

Then mounted he upon his Steede againe,
And with the Lady backward sought to wend.
That path he kept which beaten was most plaine,
Ne ever would to any byway bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them brought.
So forward on his way (with God to frend)
He passed forth, and new adventure sought:
Long way he traveiled before he heard of ought.

XXIX

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
An aged Sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had:
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad;
And all the way he prayed as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

XXX

He faire the knight saluted, louting[1] low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was;
And after asked him, if he did know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
"Ah! my dear sonne," (quoth he) "how should, alas!
Silly[2] old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits not with such thinges to mell.[3]

XXXI

"But if of daunger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrie, farre and neare."
"Of such," (saide he,) "I chiefly doe inquere,
And shall thee well rewarde to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight his dayes doth weare;
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a space."

[1] bending
[2] simple
[3] meddle

XXXII

"Far hence" (quoth he) "in wastfull wildernesse
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse."
"Now," (saide the Ladie,) "draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be; for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
The Sunne, that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite [1] his steedes the Ocean waves emong.

XXXIII

"Then with the Sunne take, Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell best."
"Right well, Sir knight, ye have advised bin,"
Quoth then that aged man: "the way to win
Is wisely to advise; now day is spent:
Therefore with me ye may take up your In
For this same night." The knight was well content;
So with that godly father to his home they went.

XXXIV

A litle lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people that did pas
In traveill to and froe: a litle wyde [2]
There was an holy chappell edifyde,[3]
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy things each morne and eventyde:
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

XXXV

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainement where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all things at their will:
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas;
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas:
He told of Saintes and Popes, and evermore
He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before.

XXXVI

The drouping night thus creepeth on them fast;
And the sad humor loading their eyeliddes,
As messenger of Morpheus on them cast
Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleep them biddes.
Unto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes: [4]
Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,
He to his studie goes; and there amiddes
His magick bookes, and artes of sundrie kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes to trouble sleepy minds.

[1] feed [2] way off [3] built [4] sends off

XXXVII

Then choosing out few words most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame;
With which, and other spelles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame;
And cursed heven; and spake reprochful shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light:
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon, prince of darknes and dead night;
At which Cocytus quakes, and Styx is put to flight.

XXXVIII

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes dredd
Legions of Sprights, the which, like litle flyes
Fluttring about his ever-damned hedd,
Awaite whereto their service he applyes,
To aide his friendes, or fray his enimies.
Of those he chose out two, the falsest twoo,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes:
The one of them he gave a message too,
The other by him selfe staide, other worke to doo.

XXXIX

He, making speedy way through spersed[1] ayre,
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
And low, where dawning day doth never peepe,
His dwelling is; there Tethys[2] his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia still doth steepe
In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,
Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred

[1] dispersed

XL

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yvory,
The other all with silver overcast;
And wakeful dogges before them farre doe lye,
Watching to banish Care their enimy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.
By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deepe
In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.[3]

XLI

And more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,[4]
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne.
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still[5] are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard; but carelesse Quiet lyes
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

[2] the ocean
[3] heed
[4] roof
[5] ever

XLII

The Messenger approching to him spake;
But his waste wordes retournd to him in vaine:
So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,
Whereat he gan to stretch; but he againe
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

XLIII

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatned unto him the dreaded name
Of Hecate: whereat he gan to quake,
And, lifting up his lompish head, with blame
Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.
"Hether" (quoth he,) "me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame,
He bids thee to him send for his intent
A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent.[1]

XLIV

The God obayde; and, calling forth straight way
A diverse Dreame out of his prison darke,
Delivered it to him, and downe did lay
His heavie head, devoide of careful carke;[2]
Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.
He, backe returning by the Yvorie dore,
Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke;
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

XLV

Who all this while, with charmes and hidden artes,
Had made a Lady of that other Spright,
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes,
So lively and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight:
The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una fit.

XLVI

Now, when that ydle dreame was to him brought,
Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly void of evil thought,
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as he him schooled privily:
And that new creature, borne without her dew,[3]
Full of the makers guyle, with usage sly
He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned hew.

XLVII

Thus, well instructed, to their worke they haste;
And, comming where the knight in slomber lay,

[1] sense [2] grief [3] due

The one upon his hardie head him plaste,
And made him dreame of loves and lustfull play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy.
Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,
And to him playnd, how that false winged boy
Her chaste hart had subdewd to learne Dame Pleasures toy.

XLVIII

And she her selfe, of beautie soveraigne Queene,
Fayre Venus, seemde unto his bed to bring
Her, whom he, waking, evermore did weene
To bee the chastest flowre that aye did spring
On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose Leman to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing,
Hymen Iö Hymen! dauncing all around;
Whylst freshest Flora her with Yvie[1] girlond[2] crownd.

XLIX

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He started up, as seeming to mistrust
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his.
Lo! there before his face his Ladie is,
Under blacke stole hyding her bayted hooke;
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and lovely looke,
Most like that virgin true which for her knight him took.

L

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
And half enraged at her shamelesse guise,
He thought have slaine her in his fierce despight;
But hastie heat tempring with sufferance wise,
He stayde his hand; and gan himselfe advise
To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned truth.
Wringing her hands, in wemens pitteous wise,
Tho can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth
Both for her noble blood, and for her tender youth.

LI

And sayd, "Ah Sir, my liege Lord, and my love,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,
Or the blind God that doth me thus amate,[3]
For hoped love to winne me certaine hate?
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
Die is my dew; yet rew my wretched state,
You, whom my hard avenging destinie
Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently.

LII

"Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leave
My fathers kingdom"—There she stopt with teares;
Her swollen hart her speech seemd to bereave,

[1] ivy [2] garland [3] dismay

And then againe begonne; "My weaker yeares,
Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your fayth for succour and sure ayde:
Let me not die in languour and long teares."
"Why, Dame," (quoth he,) "What hath ye thus dismayd?
What frayes [1] ye, that were wont to comfort me afrayd?"

LIII

"Love of your selfe," she saide, "and deare constraint,
Lets me not sleepe, but waste the wearie night
In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,
Whiles you in carelesse sleepe are drowned quight."
Her doubtfull words made that reboubted knight
Suspect her truth: yet since no' untruth he knew,
Her fawning love with foule disdainefull spight
He would not shend; but said, "Deare dame, I rew,
That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto you grew.

LIV

"Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
For all so deare as life is to my hart,
I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound:
Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,
Where cause is none; but to your rest depart."
Not all content, yet seemd she to appease
Her mournefull plaintes, beguiled of her art,
And fed with words that could not chose but please:
So, slyding softly forth, she turnd as to her ease.

LV

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much griev'd to thinke that gentle Dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last, dull wearines of former fight
Having yrockt asleepe his irkesome spright,
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine
With bowres, and beds, and ladies deare delight:
But, when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformed spright he backe returnd againe.

CANTO II

The guilefull great Enchaunter parts
The Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead faire falshood steps,
And workes him woefull ruth.

I

By this the Northerne wagoner had set
His sevenfold teme [2] behind the stedfast starre
That was in Ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To al that in the wide deepe wandring arre;
And chearefull Chaunticlere with his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phoebus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the Easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his roome did fill:

[1] frightens

[2] the seven stars of Charles's Wain

II

When those accursed messengers of hell,
That feigning dreame, and that faire-forged Spright,
Came to their wicked maister, and gan tel
Their bootelesse paines, and ill succeeding night:
Who, in all rage to see his skilfull might
Deluded so, gan threaten hellish paine,
And sad Proserpines wrath, them to affright:
But, when he saw his threatning was but vaine,
He cast about, and searcht his baleful bokes againe.

III

Eftsoones he tooke that miscreated faire,
And that false other Spright, on whom he spred
A seeming body of the subtile aire,
Like a young Squire, in loves and lustyhed
His wanton daies that ever loosely led,
Without regard of armes and dreaded fight:
Those twoo he tooke, and in a secrete bed,
Covered with darkenes and misdeeming night,
Them both together laid to joy in vaine delight.

IV

Forthwith he runnes with feigned faithfull hast
Unto his guest, who, after troublous sights
And dreames, gan now to take more sound repast;
Whom suddenly he wakes with fearful frights,
As one aghast with feends or damned sprights,
And to him cals; "Rise, rise! unhappy Swaine,
That here wex old in sleepe, whiles wicked wights
Have knit themselves in Venus shameful chaine:
Come, see where your false Lady doth her honor staine."

V

All in amaze he suddenly up start
With sword in hand, and with the old man went;
Who soone him brought into a secret part,
Where that false couple were full closely ment
In wanton lust and leud embracement:
Which when he saw, he burnt with gealous fire;
The eie of reason was with rage yblent,
And would have slaine them in his furious ire,
But hardly was restreined of that aged sire.

VI

Retourning to his bed in torment great,
And bitter anguish of his guilty sight,
He could not rest; but did his stout heart eat,
And wast his inward gall with deepe despight,
Yrkesome of life, and too long lingring night.
At last faire Hesperus in highest skie
Had spent his lampe, and brought forth dawning light:
Then up he rose, and clad him hastily:
The dwarfe him brought his steed; so both away do fly.

VII

Now when the rosy fingred Morning faire,
Weary of aged Tithones saffron bed,
Had spred her purple robe through deawy aire,
And the high hils Titan discovered,
The royall virgin shooke off drousy-hed;
And, rising forth out of her baser bowre,
Lookt for her knight, who far away was fled,
And for her dwarfe, that wont to wait each howre:
Then gan she wail and weepe to see that woeful stowre.[1]

VIII

And after him she rode, with so much speede
As her slowe beast could make; but all in vaine,
For him so far had borne his light-foot steede,
Pricked with wrath and fiery fierce disdaine,
That him to follow was but fruitlesse paine:
Yet she her weary limbes would never rest;
But every hil and dale, each wood and plaine,
Did search, sore grieved in her gentle brest,
He so ungently left her, whome she loved best.

IX

But subtill Archimago, when his guests
He saw divided into double parts,
And Una wandring in woods and forrests,
Th' end of his drift, he praisd his divelish arts,
That had such might over true meaning harts:
Yet rests not so, but other meanes doth make,
How he may worke unto her further smarts;
For her he hated as the hissing snake,
And in her many troubles did most pleasure take.

X

He then devisde himselfe how to disguise;
For by his mighty science he could take
As many formes and shapes in seeming wise,
As ever Proteus to himselfe could make:
Sometime a fowle, sometime a fish in lake,
Now like a foxe, now like a dragon fell;
That of himselfe he ofte for feare would quake,
And oft would flie away. O! who can tell
The hidden powre of herbes, and might of Magick spel?

XI

But now seemde best the person to put on
Of that good knight, his late beguiled guest:
In mighty armes he was yclad anon,
And silver shield; upon his coward brest
A bloody crosse, and on his craven crest
A bounch of heares discoloured diversly.
Full jolly knight he seemde, and wel addrest;
And when he sate upon his courser free,
Saint George himselfe ye would have deemed him to be.

XII

But he, the knight whose semblaunt he did beare,
The true Saint George, was wandred far away,

[1] distress

Still flying from his thoughts and gealous feare:
Will was his guide, and griefe led him astray.
At last him chaunst to meete upon the way
A faithlesse Sarazin, all armde to point,
In whose great shield was writ with letters gay
Sans foy; full large of limbe and every joint
He was, and cared not for God or man a point.

XIII

Hee had a faire companion of his way,
A goodly Lady clad in scarlot red,
Purfled [1] with gold and pearle of rich assay;
And like a Persian mitre on her hed
Shee wore, with crowns and owches [2] garnished,
The which her lavish lovers to her gave.
Her wanton palfrey all was overspred
With tinsell trappings, woven like a wave,
Whose bridle rung with golden bels and bosses [3] brave.

XIV

With faire disport, and courting dalliaunce,
She intertainde her lover all the way;
But, when she saw the knight his speare advaunce,
She soone left off her mirth and wanton play,
And bad her knight addresse him to the fray,
His foe was nigh at hand. He, prickte with pride
And hope to winne his Ladies hearte that day,
Forth spurred fast: adowne his coursers side
The red bloud trickling staind the way, as he did ride.

XV

The knight of the Redcrosse, when him he spide
Spurring so hote with rage dispiteous,
Gan fairely couch his speare, and towards ride.
Soone meete they both, both fell and furious,
That, daunted with theyr forces hideous,
Their steeds doe stagger, and amazed stand;
And eke themselves, too rudely rigorous,
Astonied with the stroke of their owne hand,
Doe backe rebutte,[4] and ech to other yealdeth land.

XVI

As when two rams, stird with ambitious pride,
Fight for the rule of the rich fleeced flocke,
Their horned fronts so fierce on either side
Doe meete, that, with the terror of the shocke,
Astonied, both stand sencelesse as a blocke,
Forgetfull of the hanging victory:
So stood these twaine, unmoved as a rocke,
Both staring fierce, and holding idely
The broken reliques of their former cruelty.

XVII

The Sarazin, sore daunted with the buffe,
Snatcheth his sword, and fiercely to him flies;

[1] embroidered along the edge
[2] jewels
[3] knobs
[4] recoil

Who well it wards, and quyteth cuff with cuff:
Each others equall puissaunce envies,
And through their iron sides with cruell spies [1]
Does seeke to perce; repining courage yields
No foote to foe: the flashing fier flies,
As from a forge, out of their burning shields;
And streams of purple bloud new die the verdant fields.

XVIII

"Curse on that Cross," (quoth then the Sarazin,)
"That keepes thy body from the bitter fitt! [2]
Dead long ygoe, I wote, thou haddest bin,
Had not that charme from thee forwarned itt:
But yet I warne thee now assured sitt,
And hide thy head." Therewith upon his crest
With rigor so outrageous he smitt,
That a large share it hewd out of the rest,
And glauncing downe his shield from blame him fairly blest.[3]

XIX

Who, thereat wondrous wroth, the sleeping spark
Of native vertue gan eftsoones revive;
And at his haughty helmet making mark,
So hugely stroke, that it the steele did rive,
And cleft his head. He, tumbling downe alive,
With bloudy mouth his mother earth did kis,
Greeting his grave: his grudging ghost [4] did strive
With the fraïle flesh; at last it flitted is,
Whither the soules doe fly of men that live amis.

XX

The Lady, when she saw her champion fall
Like the old ruines of a broken towre,
Staid not to waile his woefull funerall,[5]
But from him fled away with all her powre;
Who after her as hastily gan scowre,
Bidding the dwarfe with him to bring away
The Sarazins shield, signe of the conqueroure.
Her soone he overtooke, and bad to stay;
For present cause was none of dread her to dismay.

XXI

Shee turning backe, with ruefull countenaunce,
Cride, "Mercy, mercy, Sir, vouchsafe to show
On silly Dame, subject to hard mischaunce,
And to your mighty wil!" Her humblesse low,
In so ritch weedes, and seeming glorious show,
Did much emmove his stout heroïcke heart;
And said, "Deare dame, your suddein overthrow
Much rueth me; but now put feare apart,
And tel both who ye be, and who that tooke your part."

[1] fierce searchings
[2] death
[3] kept
[4] murmuring spirit
[5] death

XXII

Melting in teares, then gan shee thus lament.
"The wretched woman, whom unhappy howre
Hath now made thrall to your commandement,
Before that angry heavens list to lowre,
And fortune false betraide me to thy powre,
Was (O! what now availeth that I was?)
Borne the sole daughter of an Emperour,
He that the wide West under his rule has,
And high hath set his throne where Tiberis doth pas.

XXIII

"He, in the first flowre of my freshest age,
Betrothed me unto the onely haire
Of a most mighty king, most rich and sage:
Was never Prince so faithfull and so faire,
Was never Prince so meeke and debonaire;
But ere my hoped day of spousall shone,
My dearest Lord fell from high honors staire
Into the hands of hys accursed fone,[1]
And cruelly was slaine; that shall I ever mone.

XXIV

"His blessed body, spoild of lively breath,
Was afterward, I know not how, convaid,
And fro me hid: of whose most innocent death
When tidings came to mee, unhappy maid,
O, how great sorrow my sad soule assaid! [2]
Then forth I went his woefull corse to find,
And many yeares throughout the world I straid,
A virgin widow, whose deepe wounded mind
With love long time did languish, as the stricken hind.

XXV

"At last it chaunced this proud Sarazin
To meete me wandring; who perforce me led
With him away, but yet could never win
The Fort, that Ladies hold in soveraigne dread.
There lies he now with foule dishonor dead,
Who, whiles he livde, was called proud Sans foy,
The eldest of three brethren; all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sans joy;
And twixt them both was born the bloudy bold Sans loy.

XXVI

"In this sad plight, friendlesse, unfortunate,
Now miserable I, Fidessa, dwell,
Craving of you, in pitty of my state,
To doe none ill, if please ye not doe well."
He in great passion al this while did dwell,
More busying his quicke eies her face to view,
Then his dull eares to heare what shee did tell;
And said, "faire lady, hart of flint would rew
The undeserved woes and sorrowes, which ye shew.

[1] foes
[2] assailed

XXVII

"Henceforth in safe assuraunce may ye rest,
Having both found a new friend you to aid,
And lost an old foe that did you molest;
Better new friend then an old foe is said."
With chaunge of chear the seeming simple maid
Let fal her eien, as shamefast, to the earth,
And yeelding soft, in that she nought gainsaid,
So forth they rode, he feining seemely merth,
And shee coy lookes: so dainty, they say, maketh derth.

XXVIII

Long time they thus together traveiled;
Til, weary of their way, they came at last
Where grew two goodly trees, that faire did spred
Their armes abroad, with gray mosse overcast;
And their greene leaves, trembling with every blast,
Made a calme shadowe far in compasse round:
The fearefull shepheard, often there aghast,
Under them never sat, ne wont there sound
His mery oaten pipe, but shund th' unlucky ground.

XXIX

But this good knight, soone as he them can spie,
For the coole shade him thither hastly got:
For golden Phoebus, now ymounted hie,
From fiery wheeles of his faire chariot
Hurled his beame so scorching cruell hot,
That living creature mote it not abide;
And his new Lady it endured not.
There they alight, in hope themselves to hide
From the fierce heat, and rest their weary limbs a tide.[1]

XXX

Faire seemely pleasaunce each to other makes,
With goodly purposes, there as they sit;
And in his falsed fancy he her takes
To be the fairest wight that lived yit;
Which to expresse he bends his gentle wit:
And, thinking of those braunches greene to frame
A girlond for her dainty forehead fit,
He pluckt a bough; out of whose rifte there came
Smal drops of gory bloud, that trickled down the same.

XXXI

Therewith a piteous yelling voice was heard,
Crying, "O! spare with guilty hands to teare
My tender sides in this rough rynd embard; [2]
But fly, ah! fly far hence away, for feare
Least to you hap that happened to me heare,
And to this wretched Lady, my deare love;
O, too deare love, love bought with death too deare!"
Astond he stood, and up his heare did hove; [3]
And with that suddein horror could no member move.

[1] season
[2] confined
[3] stand

XXXII

At last whenas the dreadfull passion
Was overpast, and manhood well awake,
Yet musing at the straunge occasion,
And doubting much his sence, he thus bespake:
"What voice of damned Ghost from Limbo lake,
Or guilefull spright wandring in empty aire,
Both which fraile men doe oftentimes mistake,
Sends to my doubtful eares these speaches rare,
And ruefull plaints, me bidding guiltlesse blood to spare?"

XXXIII

Then, groning deep; "Nor damned Ghost," (quoth he,)
"Nor guileful sprite to thee these words doth speake;
But once a man, Fradubio, now a tree;
Wretched man, wretched tree! whose nature weake
A cruell witch, her cursed will to wreake,
Hath thus transformed, and plast in open plaines,
Where Boreas doth blow full bitter bleake,
And scorching Sunne does dry my secret vaines;
For though a tree I seme, yet cold and heat me paines."

XXXIV

"Say on, Fradubio, then, or man or tree,"
Quoth then the Knight; "by whose mischievous arts
Art thou misshaped thus, as now I see?
He oft finds med'cine who his griefe imparts;
But double griefs afflict concealing harts,
As raging flames who striveth to suppresse."
"The author then," (said he) "of all my smarts,
Is one Duessa, a false sorceresse,
That many errant[1] knights hath broght to wretchednesse.

XXXV

"In prime of youthly yeares, when corage hott
The fire of love, and joy of chevalree,
First kindled in my brest, it was my lott
To love this gentle Lady, whome ye see
Now not a Lady, but a seeming tree;
With whome, as once I rode accompanyde,
Me chaunced of a knight encountred bee,
That had a like faire Lady by his syde;
Lyke a faire Lady, but did fowle Duessa hyde.

XXXVI

"Whose forged beauty he did take in hand
All other Dames to have exceeded farre:
I in defence of mine did likewise stand,
Mine, that did then shine as the Morning starre.
So both to batteill fierce arraunged arre,
In which his harder fortune was to fall
Under my speare: such is the dye[2] of warre.
His Lady, left as a prise martiall,
Did yield her comely person to be at my call.

XXXVII

"So doubly lov'd of ladies, unlike faire,
Th' one seeming such, the other such indeede,

[1] wandering [2] chance

One day in doubt I cast for to compare
Whether in beauties glorie did exceede
A Rosy girlond was the victors meede.
Both seemde to win, and both seemde won to bee,
So hard the discord was to be agreede.
Frælissa was as faire as faire mote bee,
And ever false Duessa seemde as faire as shee.

XXXVIII

"The wicked witch, now seeing all this while
The doubtfull ballaunce equally to sway,
What not by right she cast to win by guile:
And by her hellish science raisd streight way
A foggy mist that overcast the day,
And a dull blast, that breathing on her face
Dimmed her former beauties shining ray,
And with foule ugly forme did her disgrace:
Then was she fayre alone, when none was faire in place.

XXXIX

"Then cride she out, 'Fye, fye! deformed wight,
Whose borrowed beautie now appeareth plaine
To have before bewitched all mens sight:
O! leave her soone, or let her soone be slaine.'
Her loathly visage viewing with disdaine,
Eftsoones I thought her such as she me told,
And would have kild her; but with faigned paine
The false witch did my wrathfull hand withhold:
So left her, where she now is turnd to treen mould.[1]

XL

"Thensforth I tooke Duessa for my Dame,
And in the witch unweeting joyd long time,
Ne ever wist but that she was the same;
Till on a day (that day is everie Prime,[2]
When Witches wont do penance for their crime,)
I chaunst to see her in her proper hew,
Bathing her selfe in origane[3] and thyme:
A filthy foule old woman I did vew,
That ever to have toucht her I did deadly rew.

XLI

"Her neather partes misshapen, monstruous,
Were hidd in water, that I could not see;
But they did seeme more foule and hideous,
Then womans shape man would beleeve to bee.
Thensforth from her most beastly companie
I gan refraine, in minde to slipp away,
Soone as appeard safe opportunitie:
For danger great, if not assurd decay,
I saw before mine eyes, if I were knowne to stray.

XLII

"The divelish hag by chaunges of my cheare
Perceiv'd my thought; and, drownd in sleepie night,
With wicked herbes and oyntments did besmeare
My body all, through charmes and magicke might,
That all my senses were bereaved quight:
Then brought she me into this desert waste,

[1] shape of trees
[2] spring
[3] marjoram

And by my wretched lovers side me pight,[1]
Where now, enclosd in wooden wals full faste,
Banisht from living wights, our wearie daies we waste."

XLIII

"But how long time," said then the Elfin knight,
"Are you in this misformed hous to dwell?"
"We may not chaunge," (quoth he,) "this evill plight,
Till we be bathed in a living well:
That is the terme prescribed by the spell."
"O! how," sayd he, "mote I that well out find,
That may restore you to your wonted well?"
"Time and suffised [2] fates to former kynd
Shall us restore; none else from hence may us unbynd."

XLIV

The false Duessa, now Fidessa hight,
Heard how in vaine Fradubio did lament,
And knew well all was true. But the good knight,
Full of sad feare and ghastly dreriment,
When all this speech the living tree had spent,
The bleeding bough did thrust into the ground,
That from the blood he might be innocent,
And with fresh clay did close the wooden wound:
Then, turning to his Lady, dead with feare her fownd.

XLV

Her seeming dead he fownd with feigned feare,
As all unweeting of that well she knew;
And paynd himselfe with busie care to reare
Her out of carelesse swowne. Her eyelids blew,
And dimmed sight, with pale and deadly hew,
At last she up gan lift: with trembling cheare
Her up he tooke, (too simple and too trew)
And oft her kist. At length, all passed feare,
He set her on her steede, and forward forth did beare.

[1] fixed [2] satisfied

CANTO III

Forsaken Truth long seekes her love,
And makes the Lyon mylde;
Marres blind Devotions mart, and fals
In hand of leachour vylde.

I

Nought is there under heav'ns wide hollownesse,
That moves more deare compassion of mind,
Then beautie brought t'unworthie wretchednesse
Through envies snares, or fortunes freakes unkind.
I, whether lately through her brightnes blynd,
Or through alleageance, and fast fealty,
Which I do owe unto all womankynd,
Feele my hart perst with so great agony,
When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

II

And now it is empassioned so deepe,
For fairest Unaes sake, of whom I sing,
That my frayle eies these lines with tears do steepe,
To thinke how she through guyleful handeling,

Though true as touch,[1] though daughter of a king,
Though faire as ever living wight was fayre,
Though nor in word nor deede ill meriting,
Is from her knight divorced in despayre,
And her dew loves deryv'd [2] to that vile witches shayre.

III

Yet she, most faithful Ladie, all this while
Forsaken, wofull, solitarie mayd,
Far from all peoples preace,[3] as in exile,
In wildernesse and wastfull deserts strayd,
To seeke her knight; who, subtily betrayd
Through that late vision which th' Enchaunter wrought,
Had her abandond. She, of nought affrayd,
Through woods and wastnes wide him daily sought;
Yet wished tydinges none of him unto her brought.

IV

One day, nigh wearie of the yrkesome way,
From her unhastie beast she did alight;
And on the grasse her dainty limbs did lay
In secrete shadow, far from all mens sight:
From her fayre head her fillet she undight,[4]
And layd her stole aside. Her angels face,
As the great eye of heaven, shyned bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortall eye behold such heavenly grace.

V

It fortuned, out of the thickest wood
A ramping Lyon rushed suddeinly,
Hunting full greedy after salvage blood.
Soone as the royall virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth at her ran greedily,
To have attonce devourd her tender corse;
But to the pray when as he drew more ny,
His bloody rage aswaged with remorse,
And, with the sight amazd, forgat his furious forse.

VI

In stead thereof he kist her wearie feet,
And lickt her lilly hands with fawning tong,
As he her wronged innocence did weet.[5]
O, how can beautie maister the most strong,
And simple truth subdue avenging wrong!
Whose yielded pryde and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked long,
Her hart gan melt in great compassion;
And drizling teares did shed for pure affection.

VII

"The Lyon, Lord of everie beast in field,"
Quoth she, "his princely puissance doth abate,
And mightie proud to humble weake does yield,
Forgetfull of the hungry rage, which late
Him prickt, in pittie of my sad estate:
But he, my Lyon, and my noble Lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
Her, that him lov'd, and ever most adord
As the God of my life? why hath he me abhord?"

[1] touchstone
[2] transferred
[3] press, crowd
[4] undid
[5] know

VIII

Redounding teares did choke th' end of her plaint,
Which softly ecchoed from the neighbour wood;
And, sad to see her sorrowfull constraint,
The kingly beast upon her gazing stood:
With pittie calmd downe fell his angry mood.
At last, in close hart shutting up her payne,
Arose the virgin, borne of heavenly brood,
And to her snowy Palfrey got agayne.
To seeke her strayed Champion if she might attayne.

IX

The Lyon would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong gard
Of her chast person, and a faythfull mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortunes hard:
Still, when she slept, he kept both watch and ward;
And, when she wakt, he wayted diligent,
With humble service to her will prepard:
From her fayre eyes he tooke commandement,
And ever by her lookes conceived her intent.

X

Long she thus traveiled through deserts wyde,
By which she thought her wandring knight shold pas,
Yet never shew of living wight espyde;
Till that at length she found the troden gras,
In which the tract of peoples footing was,
Under the steepe foot of a mountaine hore:
The same she followes, till at last she has
A damzel spyde, slow footing her before,
That on her shoulders sad a pot of water bore.

XI

To whom approching she to her gan call,
To weet if dwelling place were nigh at hand;
But the rude wench her answerd nought at all:
She could not heare, nor speake, nor understand;
Till, seeing by her side the Lyon stand,
With suddeine feare her pitcher downe she threw,
And fled away: for never in that land
Face of fayre Lady she before did vew,
And that dredd Lyons looke her cast in deadly hew.

XII

Full fast she fled, ne ever lookt behynd,
As if her life upon the wager lay;
And home she came, whereas her mother blynd
Sate in eternall night: nought could she say;
But, suddeine catching hold, did her dismay
With quaking hands, and other signes of feare:
Who, full of ghastly fright and cold affray,[1]
Gan shut the dore. By this arrived there
Dame Una, weary Dame, and entrance did requere:

XIII

Which when none yielded, her unruly Page
With his rude clawes the wicket[2] open rent,

[1] terror [2] small door

And let her in; where, of his cruell rage
Nigh dead with feare, and faint astonishment,
Shee found them both in darksome corner pent;
Where that old woman day and night did pray
Upon her beads, devoutly penitent:
Nine hundred *Pater nosters* every day,
And thrise nine hundred *Aves* she was wont to say.

XIV

And to augment her painefull penaunce more,
Thrise every weeke in ashes shee did sitt,
And next her wrinkled skin rough sackecloth wore,
And thrise three times did fast from any bitt;
But now, for feare her beads she did forgett:
Whose needlesse dread for to remove away,
Faire Una framed words and count'naunce fitt;
Which hardly doen, at length she gan them pray,
That in their cotage small that night she rest her may.

XV

The day is spent; and commeth drowsie night,
When every creature shrowded is in sleepe.
Sad Una downe her laies in weary plight,
And at her feete the Lyon watch doth keepe:
In stead of rest she does lament and weepe,
For the late losse of her deare loved knight,
And sighes, and grones, and evermore does steepe
Her tender brest in bitter teares all night;
All night she thinks too long, and often lookes for light.

XVI

Now when Aldeboran was mounted hye
Above the shinie Cassiopeias chaire,
And all in deadly sleepe did drowned lye
One knocked at the dore, and in would fare:
He knocked fast, and often curst, and sware,
That ready entraunce was not at his call;
For on his backe a heavy load he bare
Of nightly stelths, and pillage severall,
Which he had got abroad by purchas criminall.

XVII

He was, to weete,[1] a stout and sturdy thiefe,
Wont to robbe churches of their ornaments,
And poore mens boxes of their due reliefe,
Which given was to them for good intents:
The holy Saints of their rich vestiments
He did disrobe, when all men carelesse slept,
And spoild the Priests of their habiliments;
Whiles none the holy things in safety kept,
Then he by conning sleights in at the window crept.

XVIII

And all that he by right or wrong could find,
Unto this house he brought, and did bestow

[1] wit

Upon the daughter of this woman blind,
Abessa, daughter of Corceca slow,
With whom he whoredome usd, that few did know,
And fed her fatt with feast of offerings,
And plenty, which in all the land did grow:
Ne spared he to give her gold and rings;
And now he to her brought part of his stolen things.

XIX

Thus, long the dore with rage and threats he bett,
Yet of those fearfull women none durst rize.
The Lyon frayed them, him in to lett.
He would no lenger stay him to advize,
But open breakes the dore in furious wize,
And entring is, when that disdainfull beast,
Encountring fierce, him suddein doth surprize;
And, seizing cruell clawes on trembling brest,
Under his Lordly foot him proudly hath supprest.

XX

Him booteth not resist, nor succour call,
His bleeding hart is in the vengers hand;
Who streight him rent in thousand peeces small,
And quite dismembred hath: the thirsty land
Dronke up his life; his corse left on the strand.
His fearefull freends weare out the wofull night,
Ne dare to weepe, nor seeme to understand
The heavie hap which on them is alight;
Affraid least to themselves the like mishappen might.

XXI

Now when broad day the world discovered has,
Up Una rose, up rose the lyon eke;
And on their former journey forward pas,
In waies unknowne, her wandring knight to seeke,
With paines far passing that long wandring Greeke,
That for his love refused deitye.
Such were the labours of this Lady meeke,
Still seeking him, that from her still did flye;
Then furthest from her hope, when most she weened nye.

XXII

Soone as she parted thence, the fearfull twayne,
That blind old woman, and her daughter dear,
Came forth; and, finding Kirkrapine there slayne,
For anguish great they gan to rend their heare,
And beat their brests, and naked flesh to teare:
And when they both had wept and wayld their fill,
Then forth they ran, like two amazed deare,
Halfe mad through malice and revenging will,
To follow her that was the causer of their ill.

XXIII

Whome overtaking, they gan loudly bray,
With hollow houling, and lamenting cry;
Shamefully at her rayling all the way,
And her accusing of dishonesty,

That was the flowre of faith and chastity:
And still, amidst her rayling, she did pray
That plagues, and mischiefes, and long misery,
Might fall on her, and follow all the way,
And that in endlesse error she might ever stray.

XXIV

But, when she saw her prayers nought prevaile,
Shee backe retourned with some labour lost;
And in the way, as shee did weepe and waile,
A knight her mett in mighty armes embost,[1]
Yet knight was not for all his bragging bost;
But subtill Archimag, that Una sought
By traynes[2] into new troubles to have toste:
Of that old woman tidings he besought,
If that of such a Lady shee could tellen ought.

XXV

Therewith she gan her passion to renew,
And cry, and curse, and raile, and rend her heare,
Saying, that harlott she too lately knew,
That causd her shed so many a bitter teare;
And so forth told the story of her feare.
Much seemed he to mone her haplesse chaunce,
And after for that Lady did inquere;
Which being taught, he forward gan advaunce
His fair enchaunted steed, and eke his charmed launce.

XXVI

Ere long he came where Una traveild slow,
And that wilde champion wayting her besyde;
Whome seeing such, for dread hee durst not show
Him selfe too nigh at hand, but turned wyde
Unto an hil; from whence when she him spyde,
By his like seeming shield her knight by name
She weend it was, and towards him gan ride:
Approaching nigh she wist it was the same;
And with faire fearefull humblesse towards him shee came:

XXVII

And weeping said, "Ah, my long lacked Lord,
Where have ye bene thus long out of my sight?
Much feared I to have been quite abhord,
Or ought have done, that ye displeasen might,
That should as death unto my deare[3] heart light:
For since mine eie your joyous sight did mis,
My chearefull day is turnd to chearelesse night,
And eke my night of death the shadow is;
But welcome now, my light, and shining lampe of blis!"

XXVIII

He thereto meeting said, "My dearest Dame,
Far be it from your thought, and fro my wil,

[1] encased [2] snares [3] saá

To thinke that knighthood I so much should shame,
As you to leave that have me loved stil,
And chose in Faery court, of meere goodwil,
Where noblest knights were to be found on earth.
The earth shall sooner leave her kindly skil
To bring forth fruit, and make eternal derth,
Then I leave you, my liefe,[1] yborn of hevenly berth.

XXIX

"And sooth to say, why I lefte you so long,
Was for to seeke adventure in straunge place;
Where, Archimago said, a felon strong
To many knights did daily worke disgrace;
But knight he now shall never more deface:
Good cause of mine excuse,[2] that mote[3] ye please
Well to accept, and evermore embrace
My faithfull service, that by land and seas
Have vowd you to defend. Now then, your plaint appease."

XXX

His lovely words her seemd due recompence
Of all her passed paines: one loving howre
For many yeares of sorrow can dispence;
A dram of sweete is worth a pound of sowre.
Shee has forgott how many a woeful stowre
For him she late endurd; she speakes no more
Of past: true is, that true love hath no powre
To looken backe; his eies be fixt before.
Before her stands her knight, for whom she toyld so sore.

XXXI

Much like, as when the beaten marinere,
That long hath wandred in the Ocean wide,
Ofte soust in swelling Tethys saltish teare;
And long time having tand his tawney hide
With blustring breath of Heaven, that none can bide,
And scorching flames of fierce Orions hound;
Soone as the port from far he has espide,
His chearfull whistle merily doth sound,
And Nereus crownes with cups;[4] his mates pledg around.

XXXII

Such joy made Una, when her knight she found;
And eke th' enchaunter joyous seemde no lesse
Then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground
His ship far come from watrie wildernesse;
He hurles out vowes, and Neptune oft doth blesse.
So forth they past; and all the way they spent
Discoursing of her dreadful late distresse,
In which he askt her, what the Lyon ment;
Who told her all that fell,[5] in journey as she went.

[1] dear
[2] excusing me
[3] may
[4] *i.e.*, drinks cups of wine in his honor
[5] befell her

XXXIII

They had not ridden far, when they might see
One pricking towards them with hastie heat,
Full strongly armd, and on a courser free
That through his fiersnesse fomed all with sweat,
And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,
When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side:
His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat
Cruell revenge, which he in hart did hyde;
And on his shield *Sansloy* in bloody lines was dyde.

XXXIV

When nigh he drew unto this gentle payre,
And saw the Red-crosse which the knight did beare,
He burnt in fire; and gan eftsoones prepare
Himselfe to batteill with his couched speare.
Loth was that other, and did faint through feare,
To taste th' untryed dint of deadly steele:
But yet his Lady did so well him cheare,
That hope of new good hap he gan to feele;
So bent his speare, and spurd his horse with yron heele.

XXXV

But that proud Paynim forward came so ferce
And full of wrath, that, with his sharp-head speare,
Through vainly crossed shield he quite did perce;
And, had his staggering steed not shronke for feare,
Through shield and body eke he should him beare:
Yet, so great was the puissance of his push,
That from his sadle quite he did him beare.
He, tombling rudely downe, to ground did rush,
And from his gored wound a well of bloud did gush.

XXXVI

Dismounting lightly from his loftie steed,
He to him lept, in minde to reave his life,
And proudly said: "Lo! there the worthie meed
Of him that slew Sansfoy with bloody knife:
Henceforth his ghost, freed from repining strife,
In peace may passen over Lethe lake;
When mourning altars, purgd with enimies life,
The black infernall Furies doen aslake [1]
Life from Sansfoy thou tookst, Sansloy shall from thee take."

XXXVII

Therewith in haste his helmet gan unlace,
Till Una cride, "O! hold that heavie hand,
Deare Sir, what ever that thou be in place: [2]
Enough is, that thy foe doth vanquisht stand
Now at thy mercy: Mercy not withstand;
For he is one the truest knight alive,

[1] appease [2] rank

Though conquered now he lye on lowly land;
And, whilest him fortune favourd, fayre did thrive
In bloudy field; therefore, of life him not deprive."

XXXVIII

Her piteous wordes might not abate his rage,
But, rudely rending up his helmet, would
Have slayne him streight; but when he sees his age,
And hoarie head of Achimago old,
His hasty hand he doth amased hold,
And halfe ashamed wondred at the sight:
For the old man well knew he, though untold,
In charmes and magick to have wondrous might,
Ne ever wont in field, ne in round lists, to fight:

XXXIX

And said, "Why Archimago, lucklesse syre,
What doe I see? what hard mishap is this,
That hath thee hether brought to taste mine yre?
Or thine the fault, or mine the error is,
In stead of foe to wound my friend amis?"
He answered nought, but in a traunce still lay,
And on those guilefull dazed eyes of his
The cloude of death did sit. Which doen away,
He left him lying so, ne would no lenger stay:

XL

But to the virgin comes; who all this while
Amased stands, her selfe so mockt to see
By him, who has the guerdon of his guile,
For so misfeigning her true knight to bee:
Yet is she now in more perplexitie,
Left in the hand of that same Paynim bold,
From whom her booteth not at all to flie:
Who, by her cleanly garment catching hold,
Her from her Palfrey pluckt, her visage to behold.

XLI

But her fiers servant, full of kingly aw
And high disdaine, whenas his soveraine Dame
So rudely handled by her foe he saw,
With gaping jawes full greedy at him came,
And, ramping on his shield, did weene the same
Have reft away with his sharp rending clawes:
But he was stout, and lust did now inflame
His corage more, that from his griping pawes
He hath his shield redeemd, and forth his swerd he drawes.

XLII

O! then, too weake and feeble was the forse
Of salvage beast his puissance to withstand;
For he was strong, and of so mightie corse,
As ever wielded speare in warlike hand,
And feates of armes did wisely understand.
Eft soones he perced through his chaufed chest
With thrilling[1] point of deadly yron brand,

[1] piercing

And launcht his Lordly hart: with death opprest
He ror'd aloud, whiles life forsooke his stubborne brest.

XLIII

Who now is left to keepe the forlorne maid
From raging spoile of lawlesse victors will?
Her faithfull gard remov'd, her hope dismaid,
Her selfe a yielded pray to save or spill: [1]
He now, Lord of the field, his pride to fill,
With foule reproches and disdaineful spight
Her vildly entertaines; and, will or nill,
Beares her away upon his courser light:
Her prayers nought prevaile, his rage is more of might.

XLIV

And all the way, with great lamenting paine,
And piteous plaintes, she filleth his dull eares,
That stony hart could riven have in twaine;
And all the way she wetts with flowing teares;
But he, enrag'd with rancor, nothing heares.
Her servile beast yet would not leave her so,
But followes her far off, ne ought he feares
To be partaker of her wandring woe;
More mild in beastly kind then that her beastly foe.

CANTO IV

To sinfull hous of Pryde Duessa
Guydes the faithful knight:
Where, brothers death to wreak, Sansjoy
Doth chaleng him to fight.

[1] destroy

I

Young knight whatever, that dost armes professe,
And through long labours huntest after fame,
Beware of fraud, beware of ficklenesse,
In choice, and chaunge of thy deare-loved Dame;
Least thou of her believe too lightly blame,
And rash misweening doe thy hart remove:
For unto knight there is no greater shame
Then lightnesse and inconstancie in love:
That doth this Redcrosse knights ensample plainly prove.

II

Who, after that he had faire Una lorne,[2]
Through light misdeeming of her loialtie;
And false Duessa in her sted had borne,
Called Fidess', and so supposd to be,
Long with her traveild; till at last they see
A goodly building bravely garnished;
The house of mightie Prince it seemd to be,
And towards it a broad high way that led,
All bare through peoples feet which thether traveiled.

III

Great troupes of people traveild thetherward
Both day and night, of each degree and place;
But few returned, having scaped hard,
With balefull beggery, or foule disgrace;
Which ever after in most wretched case,
Like loathsome lazars,[3] by the hedges lay.
Thether Duessa badd him bend his pace,
For she is wearie of the toilsom way,
And also nigh consumed is the lingring day.

[2] abandoned

[3] beggars

IV

A stately Pallace built of squared bricke,
Which cunningly was without morter laid,
Whose wals were high, but nothing strong nor thick,
And golden foile all over them displaid,
That purest skye with brightnesse they dismaid:
High lifted up were many loftie towres,
And goodly galleries far over laid,
Full of faire windowes and delightful bowres:
And on the top a Diall told the timely howres.

V

It was a goodly heape for to behould,
And spake the praises of the workmans witt;
But full great pittie, that so faire a mould
Did on so weake foundation ever sitt:
For on a sandie hill, that still did flitt [1]
And fall away, it mounted was full hie,
That every breath of heaven shaked itt:
And all the hinder partes, that few could spie,
Were ruinous and old, but painted cunningly.

VI

Arrived there, they passed in forth right; [2]
For still to all the gates stood open wide:
Yet charge of them was to a Porter hight,[3]
Cald Malvenú, who entrance none denide:
Thence to the hall, which was on every side
With rich array and costly arras dight.
Infinite sortes of people did abide
There waiting long, to win the wished sight
Of her, that was the Lady of that Pallace bright.

VII

By them they passe, all gazing on them round,
And to the Presence mount; whose glorious vew
Their frayle amazed senses did confound:
In living Princes court none ever knew
Such endlesse richesse, and so sumpteous shew;
Ne Persia selfe, the nourse of pompous pride,
Like ever saw. And there a noble crew
Of Lords and Ladies stood on every side,
Which with their presence fayre the place much beautifide.

VIII

High above all a cloth of State was spred,
And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day;
On which there sate, most brave embellished
With royall robes and gorgeous array,
A mayden Queene that shone as Titans ray,
In glistring gold and perelesse pretious stone;
Yet her bright blazing beautie did assay
To dim the brightnesse of her glorious throne,
As envying her selfe, that too exceeding shone:

IX

Exceeding shone, like Phœbus fayrest childe,
That did presume his fathers fyrie wayne,

[1] move
[2] straightway
[3] assigned

And flaming mouthes of steedes, unwonted wilde,
Through highest heaven with weaker hand to rayne:
Proud of such glory and advancement vayne,
While flashing beames do daze his feeble eyen,
He leaves the welkin way most beaten playne,
And, rapt with whirling wheeles, inflames the skyen
With fire not made to burne, but fayrely for to shyne.

X

So proud she shyned in her princely state,
Looking to heaven, for earth she did disdayne,
And sitting high, for lowly she did hate:
Lo! underneath her scornefull feete was layne
A dreadfull Dragon with an hideous trayne;
And in her hand she held a mirrhour bright,
Wherein her face she often vewed fayne,[1]
And in her selfe-lov'd semblance took delight;
For she was wondrous faire, as any living wight.

XI

Of griesly Pluto she the daughter was,
And sad Proserpina, the Queene of hell;
Yet did she thinke her pearelesse worth to pas
That parentage, with pride so did she swell;
And thundring Jove, that high in heaven doth dwell
And wield the world, she claymed for her syre,
Or if that any else did Jove excell;
For to the highest she did still aspyre,
Or, if ought higher were than that, did it desyre.

XII

And proud Lucifera men did her call,
That made her selfe a Queene, and crownd to be;
Yet rightfull kingdome she had none at all,
Ne heritage of native soveraintie;
But did usurpe with wrong and tyrannie
Upon the scepter which she now did hold:
Ne ruld her Realme with lawes, but pollicie,
And strong advizement of six wisards[2] old,
That, with their counsels bad, her kingdome did uphold.

XIII

Soone as the Elfin knight in presence came,
And false Duessa, seeming Lady fayre,
A gentle Husher, Vanitie by name,
Made rowme, and passage for them did prepaire:
So goodly brought them to the lowest stayre
Of her high throne; where they, on humble knee
Making obeysaunce, did the cause declare,
Why they were come her roiall state to see,
To prove the wide report of her great Majestee.

XIV

With loftie eyes, halfe loth to looke so lowe,
She thancked them in her disdainefull wise;

[1] gladly

[2] wise men

Ne other grace vouchsafed them to showe
Of Princesse worthy; scarse them bad arise.
Her Lordes and Ladies all this while devise
Themselves to setten forth to straungers sight:
Some frounce[1] their curled heare in courtly guise;
Some prancke[2] their ruffes; and others trimly dight
Their gay attyre; each others greater pride does spight.

XV

Goodly they all that knight doe entertayne,
Right glad with him to have increast their crew;
But to Duess' each one himselfe did payne
All kindnesse and faire courtesie to shew,
For in that court whylome her well they knew:
Yet the stout Faery mongst the middest crowd
Thought all their glorie vaine in knightly vew,
And that great Princesse too exceeding prowd,
That to strange knight no better countenance allowd.

XVI

Suddein upriseth from her stately place
The roiall Dame, and for her coche doth call:
All hurtlen[3] forth; and she, with princely pace,
As faire Aurora in her purple pall
Out of the East the dawning day doth call.

So forth she comes; her brightnes brode doth blaze.
The heapes of people, thronging in the hall,
Doe ride each other upon her to gaze:
Her glorious glitterand light doth all mens eies amaze.

XVII

So forth she comes, and to her coche does clyme,
Adorned all with gold and girlonds gay,
That seemd as fresh as Flora in her prime;
And strove to match, in roiall rich array,
Great Junoes golden chayre; the which, they say,
The gods stand gazing on, when she does ride
To Joves high hous through heavens bras-paved way,
Drawne of fayre Pecocks, that excell in pride,
And full of Argus eyes their tayles dispredden wide.

XVIII

But this was drawne of six unequall beasts,
On which her six sage Counsellours did ryde,
Taught to obay their bestiall beheasts,
With like conditions to their kindes applyde:
Of which the first, that all the rest did guyde,
Was sluggish Idlenesse, the nourse of sin;
Upon a slouthfull Asse he chose to ryde,
Arayd in habit blacke, and amis[4] thin,
Like to an holy Monck, the service to begin.

[1] curl
[2] adorn
[3] rush
[4] priest's robe

XIX

And in his hand his Portesse[1] still he bare,
That much was worne, but therein little redd;
For of devotion he had little care,
Still drownd in sleepe, and most of his daies dedd:
Scarse could he once uphold his heavie hedd,
To looken whether it were night or day.
May seeme the wayne was very evill ledd,
When such an one had guiding of the way,
That knew not whether right he went, or else astray.

XX

From worldly cares himselfe he did esloyne,[2]
And greatly shunned manly exercise;
From everie worke he chalenged essoyne,[3]
For contemplation sake: yet otherwise
His life he led in lawlesse riotise,
By which he grew to grievous malady;
For in his lustlesse limbs, through evill guise,
A shaking fever raignd continually.
Such one was Idlenesse, first of this company.

XXI

And by his side rode loathsome Gluttony,
Deformed creature, on a filthie swyne.
His belly was upblowne with luxury,
And eke with fatnesse swollen were his eyne;
And like a Crane his necke was long and fyne
With which he swallowed up excessive feast,
For want whereof poore people oft did pyne:
And all the way, most like a brutish beast,
He spued up his gorge, that all did him deteast.

XXII

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly clad,
For other clothes he could not weare for heate;
And on his head an yvie girland had,
From under which fast trickled downe the sweat.
Still as he rode he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did beare a bouzing[4] can,
Of which he supt so oft, that on his seat
His dronken corse he scarse upholden can:
In shape and life more like a monster then a man.

XXIII

Unfit he was for any worldly thing,
And eke unhable once to stirre or go;
Not meet to be of counsell to a king,
Whose mind in meat and drinke was drowned so,
That from his frend he seeldome knew his fo.
Full of diseases was his carcas blew,
And a dry dropsie through his flesh did flow,
Which by misdiet daily greater grew.
Such one was Gluttony, the second of that crew.

XXIV

And next to him rode lustfull Lechery
Upon a bearded Gote, whose rugged heare.

[1] breviary
[2] withdraw
[3] claimed excuse
[4] drinking

And whally[1] eies (the signe of gelosy.)
Was like the person selfe whom he did beare:
Who rough, and blacke, and filthy, did appeare,
Unseemely man to please faire Ladies eye;
Yet he of Ladies oft was loved deare,
When fairer faces were bid standen by:
O! who does know the bent of womens fantasy?

XXV

In a greene gowne he clothed was full faire,
Which underneath did hide his filthinesse;
And in his hand a burning hart he bare,
Full of vaine follies and new fanglenesse;
For he was false, and fraught with fickle-nesse,
And learned had to love with secret lookes;
And well could daunce, and sing with rue-fulnesse;
And fortunes tell, and read in loving bookes,
And thousand other waies to bait his fleshly hookes.

XXVI

Inconstant man, that loved all he saw,
And lusted after all that he did love;
Ye would his looser life be tied to law,
But joyd weake wemens hearts to tempt, and prove,
If from their loyall loves he might them move:
Which lewdnes fild him with reprochfull pain
Of that foule evill, which all men reprove,
That rotts the marrow, and consumes the braine.
Such one was Lechery, the third of all this traine.

[1] streaked

XXVII

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Uppon a Camell loaden all with gold;
Two iron coffers hong on either side,
With precious metall full as they might hold;
And in his lap an heap of coine he told;[2]
For of his wicked pelfe his God he made,
And unto hell him selfe for money sold:
Accursed usury was all his trade,
And right and wrong ylike in equall ballaunce waide.

XXVIII

His life was nigh unto deaths dore yplaste;
And thred-bare cote, and cobled shoes, hee ware;
Ne scarse good morsell all his life did taste,
But both from backe and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags, and richesse to compare:[3]
Yet childe ne kinsman living had he none
To leave them to; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
He led a wretched life, unto himselfe unknowne.

XXIX

Most wretched wight, whom nothing might suffise;
Whose greedy lust did lacke in greatest store;
Whose need had end, but no end covetise;[4]
Whose welth was want, whose plenty made him pore;
Who had enough, yett wished ever more;
A vile disease: and eke in foote and hand

[2] counted
[3] collect
[4] covetousness

A grievous gout tormented him full sore,
That well he could not touch, nor goe, nor stand.
Such one was Avarice, the fourth of this faire band.

XXX

And next to him malicious Envy rode
Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
Between his cankred teeth a venemous tode,
That all the poison ran about his chaw; [1]
But inwardly he chawed his owne maw [2]
At neighbours welth, that made him ever sad,
For death it was, when any good he saw;
And wept, that cause of weeping none he had;
But when he heard of harme he wexed wondrous glad.

XXXI

All in a kirtle of discolourd say [3]
He clothed was, ypaynted full of eies;
And in his bosome secretly there lay
An hatefull Snake, the which his taile uptyes
In many folds, and mortall sting implyes.[4]
Still as he rode he gnasht his teeth to see
Those heapes of gold with griple [5] Covetyse;
And grudged at the great felicitee
Of proud Lucifera, and his owne companee.

XXXII

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds,
And him no lesse, that any like did use;
And who with gratious bread the hungry feeds,
His almes for want of faith he doth accuse.
So every good to bad he doth abuse;
And eke the verse of famous Poets witt
He does backebite, and spightfull poison spues
From leprous mouth on all that ever writt.
Such one vile Envy was, that fifte in row did sitt.

XXXIII

And him beside rides fierce revenging Wrath,
Upon a Lion, loth for to be led;
And in his hand a burning brond he hath,
The which he brandisheth about his hed:
His eies did hurle forth sparcles fiery red,
And stared sterne on all that him beheld;
As ashes pale of hew, and seeming ded;
And on his dagger still his hand he held,
Trembling through hasty rage when choler in him sweld.

XXXIV

His ruffin [6] raiment all was stained with blood
Which he had spilt, and all to rags yrent,
Through unadvized rashnes woxen wood; [7]
For of his hands he had no governement,
Ne car'd for blood in his avengement:
But, when the furious fitt was overpast,
His cruel facts [8] he often would repent;
Yet, wilfull man, he never would forecast
How many mischieves should ensue his heedlesse hast.

XXXV

Full many mischiefes follow cruell Wrath:
Abhorred bloodshed, and tumultuous strife,
Unmanly murder, and unthrifty scath,[9]

[1] jaw
[2] stomach
[3] serge
[4] enfolds
[5] grasping
[6] disordered
[7] mad
[8] acts
[9] harm

Bitter despight, with rancours rusty knife,
And fretting griefe, the enemy of life:
All these, and many evils moe [1] haunt ire,
The swelling Splene, and Frenzy raging rife,
The shaking Palsey, and Saint Fraunces fire.
Such one was Wrath, the last of this ungodly tire.[2]

XXXVI

And, after all, upon the wagon beame,
Rode Sathan with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesy teme,
So oft as Slowth still in the mire did stand.
Huge routs of people did about them band,
Showting for joy; and still before their way
A foggy mist had covered all the land;
And, underneath their feet, all scattered lay
Dead sculls and bones of men whose life had gone astray.

XXXVII

So forth they marchen in this goodly sort,
To take the solace of the open aire,
And in fresh flowring fields themselves to sport:
Emongst the rest rode that false Lady faire,
The foule Duessa, next unto the chaire
Of proud Lucifer', as one of the traine:
But that good knight would not so nigh repaire,
Him selfe estraunging from their joyaunce vaine,
Whose fellowship seemd far unfitt for warlike swaine.

[1] more [2] train

XXXVIII

So, having solaced themselves a space
With pleasaunce of the breathing fields yfed,
They backe retourned to the princely Place;
Whereas an errant knight in armes ycled,
And heathnish shield, wherein with letters red,
Was writt *Sansjoy*, they new arrived find:
Enflam'd with fury and fiers hardy hed,
He seemd in hart to harbour thoughts unkind,
And nourish bloody vengeaunce in his bitter mind.

XXXIX

Who, when the shamed shield of slaine Sansfoy
He spide with that same Faery champions page,
Bewraying [3] him that did of late destroy
His eldest brother; burning all with rage,
He to him lept, and that same envious gage [4]
Of victors glory from him snacht away:
But th' Elfin knight, which ought [5] that warlike wage,
Disdaind to loose the meed he wonne in fray;
And, him rencountring fierce, reskewd the noble pray.

XL

Therewith they gan to hurtlen greedily,
Redoubted battaile ready to darrayne,[6]
And clash their shields, and shake their swerds on hy,
That with their sturre they troubled all the traine;
Till that great Queene, upon eternall paine

[3] revealing [4] pledge [5] owned [6] prepare

Of high displeasure that ensewen might,
Commaunded them their fury to refraine;
And, if that either to that shield had right,
In equall lists they should the morrow next it fight.

XLI

"Ah, dearest Dame," quoth then the Paynim bold,
"Pardon the error of enraged wight,
Whome great griefe made forgett the raines to hold
Of reasons rule, to see this recreaunt knight,
No knight, but treachour full of false despight
And shameful treason, who through guile hath slayn
The prowest[1] knight that ever field did fight,
Even stout Sansfoy, (O who can then refrayn?)
Whose shield he beares renverst,[2] the more to heap disdayn.

XLII

"And, to augment the glorie of his guile,
His dearest love, the faire Fidessa, loe!
Is there possessed of the traytour vile;
Who reapes the harvest sowen by his foe,
Sowen in bloodie field, and bought with woe!
That brothers hand shall dearely well requight,
So be, O Queene! you equall favour showe."
Him litle answerd th' angry Elfin knight;
He never meant with words, but swords, to plead his right:

[1] bravest [2] reversed

XLIII

But threw his gauntlet, as a sacred pledge
His cause in combat the next day to try:
So been they parted both, with harts on edge
To be aveng'd each on his enimy.
That night they pas in joy and jollity,
Feasting and courting both in bowre and hall;
For Steward was excessive Gluttony,
That of his plenty poured forth to all:
Which doen, the Chamberlain, Slowth, did to rest them call.

XLIV

Now whenas darkesome night had all displayd
Her coleblacke curtein over brightest skye;
The warlike youthes, on dayntie couches layd,
Did chace away sweet sleepe from sluggish eye,
To muse on meanes of hoped victory.
But whenas Morpheus had with leaden mace
Arrested all that courtly company,
Uprose Duessa from her resting place,
And to the Paynims lodging comes with silent pace.

XLV

Whom broad awake she findes, in troublous fitt,
Fore-casting how his foe he might annoy;
And him amoves with speaches seeming fitt:
"Ah deare Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy,
Cause of my new griefe, cause of my new joy;
Joyous to see his ymage in mine eye,

And greevd to thinke how foe did him destroy,
That was the flowre of grace and chevalrye;
Lo! his Fidessa, to thy secret faith I flye."

XLVI

With gentle wordes he can her fayrely greet,
And bad say on the secrete of her hart:
Then, sighing soft; "I learne that litle sweet
Oft tempred is," (quoth she,) "with muchell smart:
For since my brest was launcht with lovely dart
Of deare Sansfoy, I never joyed howre,
But in eternall woes my weaker hart
Have wasted, loving him with all my powre,
And for his sake have felt full many an heavie stowre.

XLVII

"At last, when perils all I weened past,
And hop'd to reape the crop of all my care,
Into new woes unweeting I was cast
By this false faytor,[1] who unworthie ware
His worthie shield, whom he with guilefull snare
Entrapped slew, and brought to shamefull grave:
Me, silly maid, away with him he bare,
And ever since hath kept in darksom cave,
For that I would not yeeld that to Sansfoy I gave.

XLVIII

"But since faire Sunne hath sperst that lowring clowd,
And to my loathed life now shewes some light,
Under your beames I will me safely shrowd
From dreaded storme of his disdainfull spight:
To you th' inheritance belonges by right
Of brothers prayse, to you eke longes his love.
Let not his love, let not his restlesse spright,
Be unreveng'd, that calles to you above
From wandring Stygian shores, where it doth endlesse move."

XLIX

Thereto said he, "Faire Dame, be nought dismaid
For sorrowes past; their griefe is with them gone:
Ne yet of present perill be affraid,
For needlesse feare did never vantage none;
And helplesse hap it booteth not to mone.
Dead is Sansfoy, his vitall paines are past,
Though greeved ghost for vengeance deep do grone:
He lives that shall him pay his dewties last,
And guiltie Elfin blood shall sacrifice in hast."

L

"O! but I feare the fickle freakes," (quoth shee)
Of fortune false, and oddes of armes in field."
"Why, dame," (quoth he) "what oddes can ever bee,
Where both doe fight alike, to win or yield?"
"Yea, but," (quoth she) "he beares a charmed shield,
And eke enchaunted armes, that none can perce;
Ne none can wound the man that does them wield."

[1] deceiver

"Charmd or enchaunted," answered he then ferce,
"I no whitt reck; [1] ne you the like need to reherce.

LI

"But, faire Fidessa, sithens [2] fortunes guile,
Or enimies powre, hath now captived you,
Returne from whence ye came, and rest a while,
Till morrow next that I the Elfe subdew,
And with Sansfoyes dead dowry you endew."
"Ah me! that is a double death," (she said)
"With proud foes sight my sorrow to renew,
Where ever yet I be, my secret aide
Shall follow you." So, passing forth, she him obaid.

[1] heed [2] since

REALISTIC COMEDY: THE SHOEMAKERS' HOLIDAY

In the development of the drama through the mystery play and the morality it is possible to observe the gradual introduction of little realistic touches which foretell the coming liberation of the type from didacticism and allegory. In the English Nativity plays, for example, the shepherds with their homely dialogue are genuine products of the English soil, and in the Towneley cycle the extended episode of Mak and his sheep stealing is an excellent start in the direction of realistic comedy. It was natural that during the great age of the drama in the reign of Elizabeth the realism of everyday life should be prominently represented.

The Shoemakers' Holiday was written by Thomas Dekker in 1599. Stories of shoemakers had appeared in book form the previous year (*The Gentle Craft,* by Thomas Deloney) and Dekker made his play from various elements in these tales. The love story of Lacy and Rose, which runs as a romantic thread through the play, is structually the central feature of the plot. But no one can doubt that the real interest of the drama centers in the character of Simon Eyre, the exuberant shoemaker, and his band of jolly workmen. They make this lively and boisterous comedy what it is. Their good fellowship and humor, the healthy pride they have in their craft, and their sense of loyalty to each other are responsible for most of the play's unusual charm.

Thomas Dekker (c. 1570-c. 1641) was slightly younger than Shakespeare. Born and bred in London, he must have known well the artisan class portrayed in this play. He was the author of many plays, of which a dozen or more are extant. In addition, he was a prolific pamphleteer, writing numerous pieces of a fugitive character and temporary popularity. Most of his work was doubtless done under the urge of necessity and is characterized by an air of haste, but through nearly all of it there is a pervasive atmosphere of kindliness and good feeling that must have been part of the man.

THOMAS DEKKER (1570?–1641?)

THE SHOEMAKERS' HOLIDAY

TO ALL GOOD FELLOWS, PROFESSORS OF THE GENTLE CRAFT, OF WHAT DEGREE SOEVER.

KIND gentlemen and honest boon companions, I present you here with a merry-conceited Comedy, called *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, acted by my Lord Admiral's Players this present Christmas before the Queen's most excellent Majesty, for the mirth and pleasant matter by Her Highness graciously accepted, being indeed no way offensive. The argument of the play I will set down in this Epistle: Sir Hugh Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, had a young gentleman of his own name, his near kinsman, that loved the Lord Mayor's daughter of London; to prevent and cross which love, the Earl caused his kinsman to be sent Colonel of a company into France: who resigned his place to another gentleman his friend, and came disguised like a Dutch shoemaker to the house of Simon Eyre in Tower Street, who served the Mayor and his household with shoes: the merriments that passed in Eyre's house, his coming to be Mayor of London, Lacy's getting his love, and other accidents, with two merry Three-men's-songs. Take all in good worth that is well intended, for nothing is purposed but mirth; mirth lengtheneth long life, which, with all other blessings, I heartily wish you. Farewell!

THE PROLOGUE

As it was pronounced before the Queen's Majesty.

As wretches in a storm, expecting day,
With trembling hands and eyes cast up to heaven,
Make prayers the anchor of their conquered hopes,
So we, dear goddess, wonder of all eyes,
Your meanest vassals, through mistrust and fear
To sink into the bottom of disgrace
By our imperfect pastimes, prostrate thus
On bended knees, our sails of hope do strike,
Dreading the bitter storms of your dislike.
Since then, unhappy men, our hap is such,
That to ourselves ourselves no help can bring,
But needs must perish, if your saint-like ears,
Locking the temple where all mercy sits,
Refuse the tribute of our begging tongues:
Oh grant, bright mirror of true chastity,
From those life-breathing stars, your sun-like eyes,
One gracious smile: for your celestial breath
Must send us life, or sentence us to death.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE KING.
THE EARL OF CORNWALL.
SIR HUGH LACY, *Earl of Lincoln.*
ROWLAND LACY, *otherwise* HANS, ASKEW } *His Nephews.*
SIR ROGER OATELEY, *Lord Mayor of London.*
MASTER HAMMON, MASTER WARNER, MASTER SCOTT } *Citizens of London.*
SIMON EYRE, *a Shoemaker.*
ROGER, *commonly called* HODGE, FIRK, RALPH } EYRE'S *Journeymen.*
LOVELL, *a Courtier.*
DODGER, *Servant to the* EARL OF LINCOLN.
A DUTCH SKIPPER.
A BOY.
ROSE, *Daughter of* SIR ROGER.
SYBIL, *her Maid.*

MARGERY, *Wife of* SIMON EYRE.
JANE, *Wife of* RALPH.
Courtiers, Attendants, Officers, Soldiers, Hunters, Shoemakers, Apprentices, Servants.

SCENE: *London and Old Ford.*

ACT I

SCENE I: *A Street in London*

(*Enter the* LORD MAYOR *and the* EARL OF LINCOLN)

Lincoln. My lord mayor, you have sundry times
Feasted myself and many courtiers more:
Seldom or never can we be so kind
To make requital of your courtesy.
But leaving this, I hear my cousin Lacy
Is much affected to your daughter Rose.
L. Mayor. True, my good lord, and she loves him so well
That I mislike her boldness in the chase.
Lincoln. Why, my lord mayor, think you it then a shame,
To join a Lacy with an Oateley's name?
L. Mayor. Too mean is my poor girl for his high birth;
Poor citizens must not with courtiers wed,
Who will in silks and gay apparel spend
More in one year than I am worth, by far:
Therefore your honor need not doubt my girl.
Lincoln. Take heed, my lord, advise you what you do!
A verier unthrift lives not in the world,
Than is my cousin; for I'll tell you what:
'Tis now almost a year since he requested
To travel countries for experience;
I furnished him with coin, bills of exchange,
Letters of credit, men to wait on him,
Solicited my friends in Italy
Well to respect him. But to see the end:
Scant had he journeyed through half Germany,
But all his coin was spent, his men cast off,
His bills embezzled,[1] and my jolly coz,
Ashamed to show his bankrupt presence here,
Became a shoemaker in Wittenberg,
A goodly science for a gentleman
Of such descent! Now judge the rest by this:
Suppose your daughter have a thousand pound,
He did consume me more in one half year;
And make him heir to all the wealth you have,
One twelvemonth's rioting will waste it all.
Then seek, my lord, some honest citizen
To wed your daughter to.
L. Mayor. I thank your lordship.
(*Aside*) Well, fox, I understand your subtilty.
(*To* LINCOLN) As for your nephew, let your lordship's eye
But watch his actions, and you need not fear,
For I have sent my daughter far enough.
And yet your cousin Rowland might do well,
Now he hath learned an occupation;
And yet I scorn to call him son-in-law.
Lincoln. Ay, but I have a better trade for him:
I thank his grace, he hath appointed him
Chief colonel of all those companies
Mustered in London and the shires about,
To serve his highness in those wars of France.
See where he comes!—

(*Enter* LOVELL, LACY, *and* ASKEW)

Lovell, what news with you?
Lovell. My lord of Lincoln, 'tis his highness' will,
That presently your cousin ship for France

[1] squandered

With all his powers; he would not for a million,
But they should land at Dieppe within four days.
Lincoln. Go certify his grace, it shall be done. (*Exit* LOVELL)
Now, cousin Lacy, in what forwardness
Are all your companies?
Lacy. All well prepared.
The men at Hertfordshire lie at Mile-end,
Suffolk and Essex train in Tothill-fields,
The Londoners and those of Middlesex,
All gallantly prepared in Finsbury,
With frolic spirits long for their parting hour.
L. Mayor. They have their imprest,[1] coats,[2] and furniture;
And, if it please your cousin Lacy come
To the Guildhall, he shall receive his pay;
And twenty pounds besides my brethren
Will freely give him, to approve our loves
We bear unto my lord, your uncle here.
Lacy. I thank your honour.
Lincoln. Thanks, my good lord mayor.
L. Mayor. At the Guildhall we will expect your coming. (*Exit*)
Lincoln. To approve your loves to me? No subtilty!
Nephew, that twenty pound he doth bestow
For joy to rid you from his daughter Rose.
But, cousins both, now here are none but friends,
I would not have you cast an amorous eye
Upon so mean a project as the love
Of a gay, wanton, painted citizen.
I know, this churl even in the height of scorn
Doth hate the mixture of his blood with thine.
I pray thee, do thou so! Remember, coz,
What honourable fortunes wait on thee:

[1] earnest money [2] armor

Increase the king's love, which so brightly shines,
And gilds thy hopes. I have no heir but thee,—
And yet not thee, if with a wayward spirit
Thou start from the true bias of my love.
Lacy. My lord, I will for honour, not desire
Of land or livings, or to be your heir,
So guide my actions in pursuit of France,
As shall add glory to the Lacy's name.
Lincoln. Coz, for those words here's thirty Portuguese[3]
And, nephew Askew, there's a few for you.
Fair Honour, in her loftiest eminence,
Stays in France for you, till you fetch her thence.
Then, nephews, clap swift wings on your designs:
Begone, begone, make haste to the Guildhall;
There presently I'll meet you. Do not stay:
Where honour beckons, shame attends delay. (*Exit*)
Askew. How gladly would your uncle have you gone!
Lacy. True, coz, but I'll o'erreach his policies.[4]
I have some serious business for three days,
Which nothing but my presence can dispatch.
You, therefore, cousin, with the companies,
Shall haste to Dover; there I'll meet with you:
Or, if I stay past my prefixed time,
Away for France; we'll meet in Normandy.
The twenty pounds my lord mayor gives to me
You shall receive, and these ten Portuguese,
Part of mine uncle's thirty. Gentle coz,

[3] Large gold coins of Portugal, worth about £4. [4] stratagems

Have care to our great charge; I know, your wisdom
Hath tried itself in higher consequence.

Askew. Coz, all myself am yours: yet have this care,
To lodge in London with all secrecy;
Our uncle Lincoln hath, besides his own,
Many a jealous eye, that in your face
Stares only to watch means for your disgrace.

Lacy. Stay, cousin, who be these?

(*Enter* SIMON EYRE, MARGERY *his wife,* HODGE, FIRK, JANE, *and* RALPH *with a piece*[1])

Eyre. Leave whining, leave whining! Away with this whimpering, this puling, these blubbering tears, and these wet eyes! I'll get thy husband discharged, I warrant thee, sweet Jane; go to![2]

Hodge. Master, here be the captains.

Eyre. Peace, Hodge; hush, ye knave, hush!

Firk. Here be the cavaliers and the colonels, master.

Eyre. Peace, Firk; peace, my fine Firk! Stand by with your pishery-pashery,[3] away! I am a man of the best presence; I'll speak to them, an[4] they were Popes.—Gentlemen, captains, colonels, commanders! Brave men, brave leaders, may it please you to give me audience. I am Simon Eyre, the mad shoemaker of Tower Street; this wench with the mealy mouth that will never tire, is my wife, I can tell you; here's Hodge, my man and my foreman; here's Firk, my fine firking[5] journeyman, and this is blubbered Jane. All we come to be suitors for this honest Ralph. Keep him at home, and as I am a true shoemaker and a gentleman of the gentle craft, buy spurs yourself, and I'll find ye boots these seven years.

Wife. Seven years, husband?

[1] patch
[2] come!
[3] worthless chatter
[4] if
[5] frisking

Eyre. Peace, midriff, peace! I know what I do. Peace!

Firk. Truly, master cormorant, you shall do God good service to let Ralph and his wife stay together. She's a young new-married woman; if you take her husband away from her a night, you undo her; she may beg in the daytime; for he's as good a workman at . . . an awl, as any is in our trade.

Jane. O let him stay, else I shall be undone.

Firk. Ay, truly, she shall be laid at one side like a pair of old shoes else, and be occupied for no use.

Lacy. Truly, my friends, it lies not in my power:
The Londoners are pressed, paid, and set forth
By the lord mayor; I cannot change a man.

Hodge. Why, then you were as good be a corporal as a colonel, if you cannot discharge one good fellow; and I tell you true, I think you do more than you can answer, to press a man within a year and a day of his marriage.

Eyre. Well said, melancholy Hodge; gramercy, my fine foreman.

Wife. Truly, gentlemen, it were ill done for such as you, to stand so stiffly against a poor young wife, considering her case, she is new-married, but let that pass: I pray, deal not roughly with her; her husband is a young man, and but newly entered, but let that pass.

Eyre. Away with your pishery-pashery, your pols and your edipols![6] Peace, midriff; silence, Cicely Bumtrinket! Let your head speak.

Firk. Yea, and the horns too, master.

Eyre. Too soon, my fine Firk, too soon! Peace, scoundrels! See you this man? Captains, you will not release him? Well, let him go; he's a proper shot; let him vanish! Peace, Jane, dry up thy

[6] repetitions: edipol is a mild asseveration

tears, they'll make his powder dankish. Take him, brave men; Hector of Troy was an hackney to him, Hercules and Termagant scoundrels, Prince Arthur's Round Table—by the Lord of Ludgate—ne'er fed such a tall, such a dapper swordsman; by the life of Pharaoh, a brave, resolute swordsman! Peace, Jane! I say no more, mad knaves.

Firk. See, see, Hodge, how my master raves in commendation of Ralph!

Hodge. Ralph, th' art a gull, by this hand, an thou goest not.

Askew. I am glad, good master Eyre, it is my hap
To meet so resolute a soldier.
Trust me, for your report and love to him,
A common slight regard shall not respect him.

Lacy. Is thy name Ralph?

Ralph. Yes, sir.

Lacy. Give me thy hand;
Thou shalt not want, as I am a gentleman.
Woman, be patient; God, no doubt, will send
Thy husband safe again; but he must go,
His country's quarrel says it shall be so.

Hodge. Th' art a gull, by my stirrup, if thou dost not go. Prick thine enemies, Ralph.

(*Enter* DODGER)

Dodger. My lord, your uncle on the Tower Hill
Stays with the lord mayor and the aldermen,
And doth request you with all speed you may,
To hasten thither.

Askew. Cousin, let's go.

Lacy. Dodger, run you before, tell them we come.—
This Dodger is mine uncle's parasite,
(*Exit* DODGER)
The arrant'st varlet that e'er breathed on earth;
He sets more discord in a noble house
By one day's broaching of his pickthank tales,
Than can be salved again in twenty years,
And he, I fear, shall go with us to France,
To pry into our actions.

Askew. Therefore, coz,
It shall behoove you to be circumspect.

Lacy. Fear not, good cousin.—Ralph, hie to your colors. (*Exit Lacy & Askew.*)

Ralph. I must, because there's no remedy;
But, gentle master and my loving dame,
As you have always been a friend to me,
So in mine absence think upon my wife.

Jane. Alas, my Ralph.

Wife. She cannot speak for weeping.

Eyre. Peace, you cracked groats, you mustard tokens, disquiet not the brave soldier. Go thy ways, Ralph!

Jane. Ay, ay, you bid him go; what shall I do when he is gone?

Firk. Why, be doing with me or my fellow Hodge; be not idle.

Eyre. Let me see thy hand, Jane. This fine hand, this white hand, these pretty fingers must spin, must card, must work; work, you bombast-cotton-candle-quean; work for your living, with a pox to you.—Hold thee, Ralph, here's five sixpences for thee; fight for the honor of the gentle craft, for the gentlemen shoemakers, the courageous cordwainers, the flower of St. Martin's, the mad knaves of Bedlam, Fleet Street, Tower Street and Whitechapel; crack me the crowns of the French knaves; a pox on them, crack them; fight, by the Lord of Ludgate; fight, my fine boy!

Firk. Here, Ralph, here's three twopences; two carry into France, the third shall wash our souls at parting, for sorrow is dry. For my sake, firk the *Basa mon cues.*

Hodge. Ralph, I am heavy at parting; but here's a shilling for thee. God send thee to cram thy slops[1] with French

[1] loose breeches

crowns, and thy enemies' bellies with bullets.

Ralph. I thank you, master, and I thank you all.

Now, gentle wife, my loving lovely Jane,
Rich men, at parting, give their wives rich gifts,
Jewels and rings, to grace their lily hands.
Thou know'st our trade makes rings for women's heels:
Here take this pair of shoes, cut out by Hodge,
Stitched by my fellow Firk, seamed by myself,
Made up and pinked with letters for thy name.
Wear them, my dear Jane, for thy husband's sake;
And every morning, when thou pull'st them on,
Remember me and pray for my return.
Make much of them; for I have made them so,
That I can know them from a thousand mo.

(*Sound drum. Enter the* Lord Mayor, *the* Earl of Lincoln, Lacy, Askew, Dodger, *and Soldiers. They pass over the stage;* Ralph *falls in amongst them;* Firk *and the rest cry "Farewell," etc., and so exeunt.*)

ACT II

Scene I: *A Garden at Old Ford*

(*Enter* Rose, *alone, making a garland*)

Rose. Here sit you down upon this flow'ry bank,
And make a garland for thy Lacy's head.
These pinks, these roses, and these violets,
These blushing gilliflowers, these marigolds,
The fair embroidery of his coronet,
Carry not half such beauty in their cheeks,
As the sweet countenance of my Lacy doth.
O my most unkind father! O my stars,
Why lowered you so at my nativity,
To make me love, yet live robbed of my love?
Here as a thief am I imprisoned
For my dear Lacy's sake within those walls,
Which by my father's cost were builded up
For better purposes; here must I languish
For him that doth as much lament, I know,
Mine absence, as for him I pine in woe.

(*Enter* Sybil)

Sybil. Good morrow, young mistress. I am sure you make that garland for me, against I shall be Lady of the Harvest.

Rose. Sybil, what news at London?

Sybil. None but good; my lord mayor, your father, and master Philpot, your uncle, and Master Scott, your cousin, and Mistress Frigbottom by Doctors' Commons, do all, by my troth, send you most hearty commendations.

Rose. Did Lacy send kind greetings to his love?

Sybil. O yes, out of cry, by my troth. I scant knew him; here 'a [1] wore a scarf; and here a scarf, here a bunch of feathers, and here precious stones and jewels, and a pair of garters,—O, monstrous! like one of our yellow silk curtains at home here in Old Ford house, here in Master Bellymount's chamber. I stood at our door in Cornhill, looked at him, he at me indeed, spake to him, but he not to me, not a word; marry go-up, thought I, with a wanion! He passed by me as proud—Marry foh! are you grown humorous, thought I; and so shut the door, and in I came.

Rose. O Sybil, how dost thou my Lacy wrong!

[1] he

My Rowland is as gentle as a lamb,
No dove was ever half so mild as he.

Sybil. Mild? Yea, as a bushel of stamped crabs.[1] He looked upon me as sour as verjuice.[2] Go thy ways, thought I; thou may'st be much in my gaskins,[3] but nothing in my nether-stocks.[4] This is your fault, mistress, to love him that loves not you; he thinks scorn to do as he's done to; but if I were as you, I'd cry: Go by, Jeronimo, go by! [5]

I'd set mine old debts against my new driblets,
And the hare's foot against the goose giblets,[6]
For if ever I sigh, when sleep I should take,
Pray God I may lose my maidenhead when I wake.

Rose. Will my love leave me then, and go to France?

Sybil. I know not that, but I am sure I see him stalk before the soldiers. By my troth, he is a proper [7] man; but, he is proper that proper doth. Let him go snick-up,[8] young mistress.

Rose. Get thee to London, and learn perfectly,
Whether my Lacy go to France, or no.
Do this, and I will give thee for thy pains
My cambric apron and my Romish gloves,
My purple stockings and a stomacher.
Say, wilt thou do this, Sybil, for my sake?

Sybil. Will I, quoth a? At whose suit? By my troth, yes I'll go. A cambric apron, gloves, a pair of purple stockings, and a stomacher! I'll sweat in purple, mistress, for you; I'll take anything that comes, a God's name. O rich! a cambric apron! Faith, then have at "up tails all." [9] I'll go jiggy-joggy to London, and be here in a trice, young mistress. (*Exit*)

[1] crushed crab-apples
[2] juice of these
[3] breeches
[4] stockings
[5] A tag from *The Spanish Tragedy.*
[6] *i.e.*, make up for an old love with a new.
[7] handsome
[8] go hang!
[9] A boisterous old game of cards.

Rose. Do so, good Sybil. Meantime wretched I
Will sit and sigh for his lost company.
(*Exit*)

Scene II: *A Street in London*

(*Enter* Lacy, *disguised as a Dutch shoemaker*)

Lacy. How many shapes have gods and kings devised,
Thereby to compass their desired loves!
It is no shame for Rowland Lacy, then,
To clothe his cunning with the gentle craft,
That, thus disguised, I may unknown possess
The only happy presence of my Rose.
For her have I forsook my charge in France,
Incurred the king's displeasure, and stirred up
Rough hatred in mine uncle Lincoln's breast.
O love, how powerful art thou, that canst change
High birth to baseness, and a noble mind
To the mean semblance of a shoemaker!
But thus it must be. For her cruel father,
Hating the single union of our souls,
Has secretly conveyed my Rose from London,
To bar me of her presence; but I trust,
Fortune and this disguise will further me
Once more to view her beauty, gain her sight.
Here in Tower Street with Eyre the shoemaker
Mean I a while to work; I know the trade,
I learnt it when I was in Wittenberg.
Then cheer thy hoping spirits, be not dismayed,
Thou canst not want: do Fortune what she can,
The gentle craft is living for a man.
(*Exit*)

SCENE III: *An Open Yard before* EYRE'S *House*

(*Enter* EYRE, *making himself ready*)

Eyre. Where be these boys, these girls, these drabs, these scoundrels? They wallow in the fat brewiss [1] of my bounty, and lick up the crumbs of my table, yet will not rise to see my walks cleansed. Come out, you powder-beef [2] queens! What, Nan! what, Madge Mumblecrust.[3] Come out, you fat midriff, swagbelly-whores, and sweep me these kennels that the noisome stench offend not the noses of my neighbours. What, Firk, I say; what, Hodge! Open my shop-windows! What, Firk, I say!

(*Enter* FIRK)

Firk. O master, is't you that speak bandog and Bedlam [4] this morning? I was in a dream, and mused what madman was got into the street so early; have you drunk this morning that your throat is so clear?

Eyre. Ah, well said, Firk; well said, Firk. To work, my fine knave, to work! Wash thy face, and thou'lt be more blest.

Firk. Let them wash my face that will eat it. Good master, send for a souse-wife, if you'll have my face cleaner.

(*Enter* HODGE)

Eyre. Away, sloven! avaunt, scoundrel!—Good-morrow, Hodge; good-morrow, my fine foreman.

Hodge. O master, good-morrow; y' are an early stirrer. Here's a fair morning.—Good-morrow, Firk, I could have slept this hour. Here's a brave day towards.

Eyre. Oh, haste to work, my fine foreman, haste to work.

Firk. Master, I am dry as dust to hear my fellow Roger talk of fair weather; let us pray for good leather, and let clowns and ploughboys and those that work in the fields pray for brave days. We work in a dry shop; what care I if it rain?

(*Enter* EYRE'S WIFE)

Eyre. How now, Dame Margery, can you see to rise?
Trip and go, call up the drabs, your maids.

Wife. See to rise? I hope 'tis time enough, 'tis early enough for any woman to be seen abroad. I marvel how many wives in Tower Street are up so soon. Gods me, 'tis not noon,—here's a yawling!

Eyre. Peace, Margery, peace! Where's Cicely Bumtrinket, your maid? She has a privy fault. . . . Call the queen up; if my men want shoe-thread, I'll swinge her in a stirrup.

Firk. Yet, that's but a dry beating; here's still a sign of drought.

(*Enter* LACY *disguised, singing*)

Lacy. *Der was een bore van Gelderland* [5]
Frolick sie byen;
He was als dronck he cold nyet stand,
Upsolce sie byen.
Tap eens de canneken,
Drincke, schone mannekin.

Firk. Master, for my life, yonder's a brother of the gentle craft; if he bear not Saint Hugh's bones, I'll forfeit my bones; he's some uplandish workman: hire him, good master, that I may learn some gibble-gabble; 'twill make us work the faster.

Eyre. Peace, Firk! A hard world! Let him pass, let him vanish; we have journeymen enow. Peace, my fine Firk!

Wife. Nay, nay, y'are best follow your man's counsel; you shall see what

[1] broth
[2] salted beef, often used as slang term of reproach
[3] An old woman in *Ralph Roister Doister.*
[4] furiously and madly
[5] There was a boor from Guelderland,
Merry they are;
He was so drunk he could not stand
On such sea legs
(Op zulke zeebeenen)
Come, fill the cannikin
Drink, fine mannikin.

will come on't; we have not men enow, but we must entertain every butter-box; but let that pass.

Hodge. Dame, 'fore God, if my master follow your counsel, he'll consume little beef. He shall be glad of men, and he can catch them.

Firk. Ay, that he shall.

Hodge. 'Fore God, a proper man, and I warrant, a fine workman. Master, farewell; dame, adieu; if such a man as he cannot find work, Hodge is not for you. (*Offers to go*)

Eyre. Stay, my fine Hodge.

Firk. Faith, an your foreman go, dame, you must take a journey to seek a new journeyman; if Roger remove, Firk follows. If Saint Hugh's bones shall not be set awork, I may prick mine awl in the walls, and go play. Fare ye well, master; good-by, dame.

Eyre. Tarry, my fine Hodge, my brisk foreman! Stay, Firk! Peace, pudding-broth! By the Lord of Ludgate, I love my men as my life. Peace, you gallimafry! Hodge, if he want work, I'll hire him. One of you to him; stay,—he comes to us.

Lacy. Goeden dach, meester, ende u, vro, oak.[1]

Firk. Nails, if I should speak after him without drinking, I should choke. And you, friend Oake, are you of the gentle craft?

Lacy. Yaw, yaw, ik bin den skomawker.

Firk. Den skomaker, quoth a! And hark you, *skomaker,* have you all your tools, a good rubbing-pin, a good stopper, a good dresser, your four sorts of awls, and your two balls of wax, your paring knife, your hand- and thumb-leathers, and good St. Hugh's bones to smooth up your work?

Lacy. Yaw, yaw; be niet vorveard.[2]

[1] Good day, master, and you, goodwife, too.
[2] be not afraid

Ik hab all de dingen voour mack skooes groot and cleane.[3]

Firk. Ha, ha! Good master, hire him; he'll make me laugh so that I shall work more in mirth than I can in earnest.

Eyre. Hear ye, friend, have ye any skill in the mystery of cordwainers?

Lacy. Ik weet niet wat yow seg; ich verstaw you niet.[4]

Firk. Why, thus, man: (*Imitating by gesture a shoemaker at work*) *Ich verste u niet,* quoth a.

Lacy. Yaw, yaw, yaw; ick can dat wel doen.

Firk. Yaw, yaw! He speaks yawing like a jackdaw that gapes to be fed with cheese-curds. Oh, he'll give a villainous pull at a can of double-beer; but Hodge and I have the vantage: we must drink first, because we are the eldest journeymen.

Eyre. What is thy name?

Lacy. Hans—Hans Meulter.

Eyre. Give me thy hand; th' art welcome.—Hodge, entertain him; Firk, bid him welcome; come, Hans. Run, wife, bid your maids, your trullibubs,[5] make ready my fine men's breakfasts. To him, Hodge!

Hodge. Hans, th'art welcome; use thyself friendly, for we are good fellows; if not, thou shalt be fought with, wert thou bigger than a giant.

Firk. Yea, and drunk with, wert thou Gargantua. My master keeps no cowards, I tell thee.—Ho, boy, bring him an heel-block, here's a new journeyman.

(*Enter* Boy)

Lacy. O, ich wersto[6] *you; ich moet een halve dossen cans betaelen;*[7] *here, boy, nempt dis skilling, tap eens freelicke.*[8] (*Exit* Boy)

[3] large and small
[4] I know not what you say; I do not understand you.
[5] worthless things (*lit.* entrails)
[6] understand
[7] pay for
[8] take this shilling, tap now freely

Eyre. Quick, snipper-snapper, away! Firk, scour thy throat, thou shalt wash it with Castilian liquor.

(*Enter* Boy)

Come, my last of the fives,[1] give me a can. Have to thee, Hans; here, Hodge; here Firk; drink, you mad Greeks, and work like true Trojans, and pray for Simon Eyre, the shoemaker.—Here, Hans, and th' art welcome.

Firk. Lo, dame, you would have lost a good fellow that will teach us to laugh. This beer came hopping in well.

Wife. Simon, it is almost seven.

Eyre. Is't so, Dame Clapper-dudgeon? Is't seven a clock, and my men's breakfast not ready? Trip and go, you soused conger, away! Come, you mad hyperboreans; follow me, Hodge; follow me, Hans; come after, my fine Firk; to work, to work a while, and then to breakfast! (*Exit*)

Firk. Soft! *Yaw, yaw,* good Hans, though my master have no more wit but to call you afore me, I am not so foolish to go behind you, I being the elder journeyman. (*Exeunt*)

Scene IV: *A Field near Old Ford*

(*Hollooing within. Enter* Master Warner *and* Master Hammon, *attired as Hunters.*)

Ham. Cousin, beat every brake, the game's not far,
This way with winged feet he fled from death,
Whilst the pursuing hounds, scenting his steps,
Find out his highway to destruction.
Besides, the miller's boy told me even now,
He saw him take soil, and he holloaed him,
Affirming him [to have been] so embost
That long he could not hold.

Warn. If it be so,
'Tis best we trace these meadows by Old Ford.

(*A noise of Hunters within. Enter a* Boy)

Ham. How now, boy? Where's the deer? Speak, saw'st thou him?

Boy. O yea; I saw him leap through a hedge, and then over a ditch, then at my lord mayor's pale, over he skipped me, and in he went me, and "holla" the hunters cried, and "there, boy; there, boy!" But there he is, 'a mine honesty.

Ham. Boy, God amercy. Cousin, let's away;
I hope we shall find better sport to-day.
(*Exeunt*)

Scene V: *Another part of the Field.*

(*Hunting within. Enter* Rose *and* Sybil)

Rose. Why, Sybil, wilt thou prove a forester?

Sybil. Upon some,[2] no; forester, go by; no, faith, mistress. The deer came running into the barn through the orchard and over the pale; I wot well, I looked as pale as a new cheese to see him. But whip, says Goodman Pin-close, up with his flail, and our Nick with a prong, and down he fell, and they upon him, and I upon them. By my troth, we had such sport; and in the end we ended him; his throat we cut, flayed him, unhorned him, and my lord mayor shall eat of him anon, when he comes. (*Horns sound within*)

Rose. Hark, hark, the hunters come; y'are best take heed,
They'll have a saying to you for this deed.

(*Enter* Master Hammon, Master Warner, *Huntsmen, and* Boy)

Ham. God save you, fair ladies.

[1] smallest (?) number five last

[2] 'Upon my word'

Sybil. Ladies! O gross!
Warn. Came not a buck this way?
Rose. No, but two does.
Ham. And which way went they? Faith, we'll hunt at those.
Sybil. At those? Upon some, no: when, can you tell?
Warn. Upon some, ay!
Sybil. Good Lord!
Warn. Wounds! Then farewell!
Ham. Boy, which way went he?
Boy. This way, sir, he ran.
Ham. This way he ran indeed, fair Mistress Rose;
Our game was lately in your orchard seen.
Warn. Can you advise, which way he took his flight?
Sybil. Follow your nose; his horns will guide you right.
Warn. Th'art a mad wench.
Sybil. O, rich!
Rose. Trust me, not I.
It is not like that the wild forest-deer
Would come so near to places of resort;
You are deceived, he fled some other way.
Warn. Which way, my sugar-candy, can you shew?
Sybil. Come up, good honeysops, upon some, no.
Rose. Why do you stay, and not pursue your game?
Sybil. I'll hold my life, their hunting-nags be lame.
Ham. A deer more dear is found within this place.
Rose. But not the deer, sir, which you had in chase.
Ham. I chased the deer, but this dear chaseth me.
Rose. The strangest hunting that ever I see.
But where's your park?
(*She offers to go away*)
Ham. 'Tis here: O stay!
Rose. Impale me, and then I will not stray.
Warn. They wrangle, wench; we are more kind than they.
Sybil. What kind of hart is that dear heart, you seek?
Warn. A hart, dear heart.
Sybil. Who ever saw the like?
Rose. To lose your heart, is't possible you can?
Ham. My heart is lost.
Rose. Alack, good gentleman!
Ham. This poor lost hart would I wish you might find.
Rose. You, by such luck, might prove your hart a hind.
Ham. Why, Luck had horns, so have I heard some say.
Rose. Now, God, an't be his will, send Luck into your way.

(*Enter the* Lord Mayor *and Servants*)

L. Mayor. What, Master Hammon? Welcome to Old Ford!
Sybil. Gods pittikins, hands off, sir! Here's my lord.
L. Mayor. I hear you had ill luck, and lost your game.
Ham. 'Tis true, my lord.
L. Mayor. I am sorry for the same.
What gentleman is this?
Ham. My brother-in-law.
L. Mayor. Y'are welcome both; sith Fortune offers you
Into my hands, you shall not part from hence,
Until you have refreshed your wearied limbs.
Go, Sybil, cover the board! You shall be guest
To no good cheer, but even a hunter's feast.
Ham. I thank your lordship.—Cousin, on my life,
For our lost venison I shall find a wife.
(*Exeunt*)
L. Mayor. In, gentlemen; I'll not be absent long.—
This Hammon is a proper gentleman,

A citizen by birth, fairly allied;
How fit an husband were he for my girl!
Well, I will in, and do the best I can,
To match my daughter to this gentleman.
(*Exit*)

ACT III

Scene I: *A Room in Eyre's House*

(*Enter* Lacy *otherwise* Hans, Skipper, Hodge, *and* Firk)

Skip. Ick sal yow wat seggen,[1] *Hans; dis skip, dat comen from Candy, is al vol, by Got's sacrament, van sugar, civet, almonds, cambrick, end alle dingen, towsand towsand ding. Nempt it, Hans, nempt it vor v meester.*[2] *Daer be de bils van laden. Your meester Simon Eyre sal hae good copen.*[3] *Wat seegen yow, Hans?*

Firk. Wat seggen de reggen de copen, slopen—laugh, Hodge, laugh!

Hans. Mine liever[4] *broder Firk, bringt Meester Eyre tot det signe un Swannekin;*[5] *daer sal yow finde dis skipper end me. Wat seggen yow, broder Firk? Doot it, Hodge. Come, skipper.*
(*Exeunt*)

Firk. Bring him, quoth you? Here's no knavery, to bring my master to buy a ship worth the lading of two or three hundred thousand pounds. Alas, that's nothing; a trifle, a bauble, Hodge.

Hodge. The truth is, Firk, that the merchant owner of the ship dares not shew his head, and therefore this skipper that deals for him, for the love he bears to Hans, offers my master Eyre a bargain in the commodities. He shall have a reasonable day of payment; he may sell the wares by that time, and be an huge gainer himself.

Firk. Yea, but can my fellow Hans lend my master twenty porpentines as an earnest penny?

[1] I shall tell you what [4] dear
[2] take it for your master [5] the sign of the Swan
[3] bargain

Hodge. Portuguese, thou wouldst say; here they be, Firk; hark, they jingle in my pocket like St. Mary Overy's bells.

(*Enter* Eyre *and his Wife*)

Firk. Mum, here comes my dame and my master. She'll scold, on my life, for loitering this Monday; but all's one, let them all say what they can, Monday's our holiday.

Wife. You sing, Sir Sauce, but I beshrew your heart,
I fear, for this your singing we shall smart.

Firk. Smart for me, dame; why, dame, why?

Hodge. Master, I hope you'll not suffer my dame to take down your journeymen.

Firk. If she take me down, I'll take her up; yea, and take her down too, a button-hole lower.

Eyre. Peace, Firk; not I, Hodge; by the life of Pharaoh, by the Lord of Ludgate, by this beard, every hair whereof I value at a king's ransom, she shall not meddle with you.—Peace, you bombast-cotton-candle-quean; away, queen of clubs; quarrel not with me and my men, with me and my fine Firk; I'll firk you, if you do.

Wife. Yea, yea, man, you may use me as you please; but let that pass.

Eyre. Let it pass, let it vanish away; peace! Am I not Simon Eyre? Are not these my brave men, brave shoemakers, all gentlemen of the gentle craft? Prince am I none, yet am I nobly born, as being the sole son of a shoemaker. Away, rubbish! vanish, melt; melt like kitchen-stuff.

Wife. Yea, yea, 'tis well; I must be called rubbish, kitchen-stuff, for a sort of knaves.

Firk. Nay, dame, you shall not weep and wail in woe for me. Master, I'll stay no longer; here's an inventory of my

shop-tools. Adieu, master; Hodge, farewell.

Hodge. Nay, stay, Firk; thou shalt not go alone.

Wife. I pray, let them go; there be more maids than Mawkin, more men than Hodge, and more fools than Firk.

Firk. Fools? Nails! if I tarry now, I would my guts might be turned to shoe-thread.

Hodge. And if I stay, I pray God I may be turned to a Turk, and set in Finsbury[1] for boys to shoot at.—Come, Firk.

Eyre. Stay, my fine knaves, you arms of my trade, you pillars of my profession. What, shall a tittle-tattle's words make you forsake Simon Eyre?—Avaunt, kitchen-stuff! Rip, you brown-bread Tannikin; out of my sight! Move me not! Have not I ta'en you from selling tripes in East-cheap, and set you in my shop, and made you hail-fellow with Simon Eyre, the shoemaker? And now do you deal thus with my journeymen? Look, you powder-beef-quean, on the face of Hodge, here's a face for a lord.

Firk. And here's a face for any lady in Christendom.

Eyre. Rip, you chitterling, avaunt! Boy, bid the tapster of the Boar's Head fill me a dozen cans of beer for my journeymen.

Firk. A dozen cans? O, brave! Hodge, now I'll stay.

Eyre. (*In a low voice to the* Boy.) An the knave fills any more than two, he pays for them. (*Exit* Boy. *Aloud.*) A dozen cans of beer for my journeymen. (*Re-enter* Boy.) Here, you mad Mesopotamians, wash your livers with this liquor. Where be the odd ten? No more, Madge, no more.—Well said. Drink and to work!—What work dost thou, Hodge? What work?

Hodge. I am making a pair of shoes for my lord mayor's daughter, Mistress Rose.

Firk. And I a pair of shoes for Sybil, my lord's maid. I deal with her.

Eyre. Sybil? Fie, defile not thy fine workmanly fingers with the feet of kitchen-stuff and basting-ladles. Ladies of the court, fine ladies, my lads, commit their feet to our apparelling; put gross work to Hans, Yark[2] and seam, yark and seam!

Firk. For yarking and seaming let me alone, an I come to't.

Hodge. Well, master, all this is from the bias. Do you remember the ship my fellow Hans told you of? The skipper and he are both drinking at the Swan. Here be the Portuguese to give earnest. If you go through with it, you cannot choose but be a lord at least.

Firk. Nay, dame, if my master prove not a lord, and you a lady, hang me.

Wife. Yea, like enough, if you may loiter and tipple thus.

Firk. Tipple, dame? No, we have been bargaining with Skellum Skanderbag—can you Dutch spreaken?—for a ship of silk Cyprus,[3] laden with sugar-candy.

(*Enter* Boy *with a velvet coat and an Alderman's gown.* Eyre *puts them on*)

Eyre. Peace, Firk; silence, Tittle-tattle! Hodge, I'll go through with it. Here's a seal-ring, and I have sent for a guarded gown and a damask cassock. See where it comes; look here, Maggy; help me, Firk; apparel me, Hodge; silk and satin, you mad Philistines, silk and satin.

Firk. Ha, ha, my master will be as proud as a dog in a doublet, all in beaten damask and velvet.

Eyre. Softly, Firk, for fearing of the nap, and wearing threadbare my gar-

[1] Finsbury Fields were reserved for archery practice.

[2] stitch

[3] a thin cloth

ments. How dost thou like me, Firk? How do I look, my fine Hodge?

Hodge. Why, now you look like yourself, master. I warrant you, there's few in the city, but will give you the wall, and come upon you with the "right worshipful."

Firk. Nails, my master looks like a threadbare cloak new turned and dressed. Lord, Lord, to see what good raiment doth! Dame, dame, are you not enamored?

Eyre. How say'st thou, Maggy, am I not brisk? Am I not fine?

Wife. Fine? By my troth, sweetheart, very fine! By my troth, I never liked thee so well in my life, sweetheart; but let that pass. I warrant, there be many women in the city have not such handsome husbands, but only for their apparel; but let that pass too.

(*Re-enter* HANS *and* SKIPPER)

Hans. Godden day, mester. Dis be de skipper dat heb de skip van marchandice; de commodity ben good; nempt it, master, nempt it.

Eyre. Godamercy, Hans; welcome skipper. Where lies this ship of merchandise?

Skip. De skip ben in revere; dor be van sugar, cyvet, almonds, cambrick, and a towsand towsand tings, gotz sacrament; nempt it, mester: ye sal heb good copen.

Firk. To him, master! O sweet master! O sweet wares! Prunes, almonds, sugar-candy, carrot-roots, turnips, O brave fatting meat! Let not a man buy a nutmeg but yourself.

Eyre. Peace, Firk! Come, skipper, I'll go abroad with you.—Hans, have you made him drink?

Skip. Yaw, yaw, ic heb veale gedrunck.

Eyre. Come, Hans, follow me. Skipper, thou shalt have my countenance in the city. (*Exeunt*)

Firk. Yaw, heb veale gedrunck, quoth a. They may well be called butterboxes, when they drink fat veal and thick beer too. But come, dame, I hope you'll chide us no more.

Wife. No, faith, Firk; no, perdy, Hodge. I do feel honor creep upon me, and which is more, a certain rising in my flesh; but let that pass.

Firk. Rising in your flesh do you feel, say you? Ay, you may be with child, but why should not my master feel a rising in his flesh, having a gown and a gold ring on? But you are such a shrew, you'll soon pull him down.

Wife. Ha, ha! prithee, peace! Thou mak'st my worship laugh; but let that pass. Come, I'll go in; Hodge, prithee, go before me; Firk, follow me.

Firk. Firk doth follow: Hodge, pass out in state. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE II: *London,—a Room in* LINCOLN'S *House*

(*Enter the* EARL OF LINCOLN *and* DODGER)

Lincoln. How now, good Dodger, what's the news in France?

Dodger. My lord, upon the eighteenth day of May
The French and English were prepared to fight;
Each side with eager fury gave the sign
Of a most hot encounter. Five long hours
Both armies fought together; at the length
The lot of victory fell on our side.
Twelve thousand of the Frenchmen that day died,
Four thousand English, and no man of name
But Captain Hyam and young Ardington,
Two gallant gentlemen; I knew them well.

Lincoln. But Dodger, prithee, tell me, in this fight
How did my cousin Lacy bear himself?
Dodger. My lord, your cousin Lacy was not there.
Lincoln. Not there?
Dodger. No, my good lord.
Lincoln. Sure, thou mistakest.
I saw him shipped, and a thousand eyes beside
Were witnesses of the farewells which he gave,
When I, with weeping eyes, bid him adieu.
Dodger, take heed.
Dodger. My lord, I am advised,
That what I spake is true: to prove it so,
His cousin Askew, that supplied his place,
Sent me for him from France, that secretly,
He might convey himself thither.
Lincoln. Is't even so?
Dares he so carelessly venture his life
Upon the indignation of a king?
Has he despised my love, and spurned those favours
Which I with prodigal hand poured on his head?
He shall repent his rashness with his soul;
Since of my love he makes no estimate,
I'll make him wish he had not known my hate.
Thou hast no other news?
Dodger. None else, my lord.
Lincoln. None worse I know thou hast.—Procure the king
To crown his giddy brows with ample honours,
Send him chief colonel, and all my hope
Thus to be dashed! But 'tis in vain to grieve;
One evil cannot a worse relieve.
Upon my life, I have found out his plot;
That old dog, Love, that fawned upon him so,
Love to that puling girl, his fair-cheeked Rose,
The lord mayor's daughter, hath distracted him,
And in the fire of that love's lunacy
Hath he burnt up himself, consumed his credit,
Lost the king's love, yea, and I fear, his life,
Only to get a wanton to his wife.
Dodger, it is so.
Dodger. I fear so, my good lord.
Lincoln. It is so—nay, sure it cannot be!
I am at my wits' end. Dodger!
Dodger. Yea, my lord.
Lincoln. Thou art acquainted with my nephew's haunts;
Spend this gold for thy pains; go seek him out;
Watch at my lord mayor's—there if he live,
Dodger, thou shalt be sure to meet with him.
Prithee, be diligent.—Lacy, thy name
Lived once in honour, now 'tis dead in shame.—
Be circumspect. (*Exit*)
Dodger. I warrant you, my lord. (*Exit*)

SCENE III: *London,—a Room in the* LORD MAYOR'S *House*

(*Enter the* LORD MAYOR *and* MASTER SCOTT)

L. Mayor. Good Master Scott, I have been bold with you,
To be a witness to a wedding-knot
Betwixt young Master Hammon and my daughter.
O, stand aside; see where the lovers come.

(*Enter* MASTER HAMMON *and* ROSE)

Rose. Can it be possible you love me so?
No, no, within those eyeballs I espy
Apparent likelihoods of flattery.

Pray now, let go my hand.
Ham. Sweet Mistress Rose,
Misconstrue not my words, nor misconceive
Of my affection, whose devoted soul
Swears that I love thee dearer than my heart.
Rose. As dear as your own heart? I judge it right,
Men love their hearts best when th'are out of sight.
Ham. I love you, by this hand.
Rose. Yet hands off now!
If flesh be frail, how weak and frail's your vow!
Ham. Then by my life I swear.
Rose. Then do not brawl;
One quarrel loseth wife and life and all.
Is not your meaning thus?
Ham. In faith, you jest.
Rose. Love loves to sport; therefore leave love, y'are best.
L. Mayor. What? square they, Master Scott?
Scott. Sir, never doubt,
Lovers are quickly in, and quickly out.
Ham. Sweet Rose, be not so strange in fancying me.
Nay, never turn aside, shun not my sight:
I am not grown so fond,[1] to fond[2] my love
On any that shall quit it with disdain;
If you will love me, so—if not, farewell.
L. Mayor. Why, how now, lovers, are you both agreed?
Ham. Yes, faith, my lord.
L. Mayor. 'Tis well, give me your hand.
Give me yours, daughter.—How now, both pull back!
What means this, girl?
Rose. I mean to live a maid.
Ham. (*Aside*) But not to die one; pause, ere that be said.
L. Mayor. Will you still cross me, still be obstinate?
Ham. Nay, chide her not, my lord, for doing well;
If she can live an happy virgin's life,
'Tis far more blessed than to be a wife.
Rose. Say, sir, I cannot: I have made a vow,
Whoever be my husband, 'tis not you.
L. Mayor. Your tongue is quick; but Master Hammon, know,
I bade you welcome to another end.
Ham. What, would you have me pule and pine and pray,
With "lovely lady," "mistress of my heart,"
"Pardon your servant," and the rhymer play,
Railing on Cupid and his tyrant's-dart;
Or shall I undertake some martial spoil,
Wearing your glove at tourney and at tilt,
And tell how many gallants I unhorsed—
Sweet, will this pleasure you?
Rose. Yea, when wilt begin?
What, love rhymes, man? Fie on that deadly sin!
L. Mayor. If you will have her, I'll make her agree.
Ham. Enforced love is worse than hate to me.
(*Aside*) There is a wench keeps shop in the Old Change,
To her will I; it is not wealth I seek;
I have enough, and will prefer her love
Before the world.—(*Aloud*) My good lord mayor, adieu.
Old love for me, I have no luck with new.
(*Exit*)
L. Mayor. Now, mammet, you have well behaved yourself,
But you shall curse your coyness if I live.—
Who's within there? See you convey your mistress
Straight to th' Old Ford! I'll keep you straight enough.
Fore God, I would have sworn the puling girl

[1] foolish [2] bestow affection

Would willingly accepted Hammon's love;
But banish him, my thoughts!—Go, minion in! (*Exit* Rose)
Now tell me, Master Scott, would you have thought
That Master Simon Eyre, the shoemaker,
Had been of wealth to buy such merchandise?

Scott. 'Twas well, my lord, your honor and myself
Grew partners with him; for your bills of lading
Shew that Eyre's gains in one commodity
Rise at the least to full three thousand pound
Besides like gain in other merchandise.

L. Mayor. Well, he shall spend some of his thousands now,
For I have sent for him to the Guildhall.

(*Enter* Eyre)

See, where he comes.—Good morrow, Master Eyre.

Eyre. Poor Simon Eyre, my lord, your shoemaker.

L. Mayor. Well, well, it likes yourself to term you so.

(*Enter* Dodger)

Now, Master Dodger, what's the news with you?

Dodger. I'd gladly speak in private to your honor.

L. Mayor. You shall, you shall.—Master Eyre and Master Scott,
I have some business with this gentleman;
I pray, let me entreat you to walk before
To the Guildhall; I'll follow presently.
Master Eyre, I hope ere noon to call you sheriff.

Eyre. I would not care, my lord, if you might call me King of Spain.—Come, Master Scott.

(*Exeunt* Eyre *and* Scott)

L. Mayor. Now, Master Dodger, what's the news you bring?

Dodger. The Earl of Lincoln by me greets your lordship,
And earnestly requests you, if you can,
Inform him, where his nephew Lacy keeps.

L. Mayor. Is not his nephew Lacy now in France?

Dodger. No, I assure your lordship, but disguised
Lurks here in London.

L. Mayor. London? is't even so?
It may be; but upon my faith and soul,
I know not where he lives, or whether he lives:
So tell my Lord of Lincoln.—Lurks in London?
Well, Master Dodger, you perhaps may start him;
Be but the means to rid him into France,
I'll give you a dozen angels for your pains:
So much I love his honor, hate his nephew.
And, prithee, so inform thy lord from me.

Dodger. I take my leave.

(*Exit* Dodger)

L. Mayor. Farewell, good Master Dodger.
Lacy in London? I dare pawn my life,
My daughter knows thereof, and for that cause
Denied young Master Hammon in his love.
Well, I am glad I sent her to Old Ford.
God's Lord, 'tis late; to Guildhall I must hie;
I know my brethren stay my company.

(*Exit*)

Scene IV: *London,—A Room in* Eyre's *House*

(*Enter* Firk, Eyre's Wife, Hans, *and* Roger)

Wife. Thou goest too fast for me, Roger. O, Firk!

Firk. Ay, forsooth.

Wife. I pray thee, run—do you hear? —run to Guildhall, and learn if my husband, Master Eyre, will take that worshipful vocation of Master Sheriff upon him. Hie thee, good Firk.

Firk. Take it? Well, I go; an' he should not take it, Firk swears to forswear him. Yes, forsooth, I go to Guildhall.

Wife. Nay, when? thou art too compendious and tedious.

Firk. O rare, your excellence is full of eloquence; how like a new cartwheel my dame speaks, and she looks like an old musty ale-bottle going to scalding.

Wife. Nay, when? thou will make me melancholy.

Firk. God forbid your worship should fall into that humor;—I run. (*Exit*)

Wife. Let me see now, Roger and Hans.

Hodge. Ay, forsooth, dame—mistress, I should say, but the old term so sticks to the roof of my mouth, I can hardly lick it off.

Wife. Even what thou wilt, good Roger; dame is a fair name for any honest Christian; but let that pass. How dost thou, Hans?

Hans. Mee tanck you, vro.[1]

Wife. Well, Hans and Roger, you see, God hath blest your master, and, perdy, if ever he comes to be Master Sheriff of London—as we are all mortal—you shall see, I will have some odd thing or other in a corner for you: I will not be your back-friend; but let that pass. Hans, pray thee, tie my shoe.

Hans. Yaw, ic sal, vro.

Wife. Roger, thou know'st the length of my foot; as it is none of the biggest, so I thank God, it is handsome enough; prithee, let me have a pair of shoes made, cork, good Roger, wooden heel too.

Hodge. You shall.

Wife. Art thou acquainted with never a farthingale-maker, nor a French hood-maker? I must enlarge my bum, ha, ha! How shall I look in a hood, I wonder! Perdy, oddly, I think.

Hodge. (*Aside*) As a cat out of a pillory: (*aloud*) very well, I warrant you, mistress.

Wife. Indeed, all flesh is grass; and, Roger, canst thou tell where I may buy a good hair?

Hodge. Yes, forsooth, at the poulterer's in Gracious Street.

Wife. Thou art an ungracious wag; perdy, I mean a false hair for my periwig.

Hodge. Why, mistress, the next time I cut my beard, you shall have the shavings of it; but they are all true hairs.

Wife. It is very hot; I must get me a fan or else a mask.

Hodge. So you had need to hide your wicked face.

Wife. Fie upon it, how costly this world's calling is; perdy, but that it is one of the wonderful works of God, I would not deal with it. Is not Firk come yet? Hans, be not so sad, let it pass and vanish, as my husband's worship says.

Hans. Ick bin vrolicke, lot see yow soo.

Hodge. Mistress, will you drink a pipe of tobacco?

Wife. Oh, fie upon it, Roger, perdy! These filthy tobacco-pipes are the most idle slavering baubles that ever I felt. Out upon it! God bless us, men look not like men that use them.

(*Enter* RALPH, *being lame*)

Roger. What, fellow Ralph? Mistress, look here, Jane's husband! Why, how now, lame? Hans, make much of him, he's a brother of our trade, a good workman, and a tall soldier.

Hans. You be welcome, broder.

Wife. Perdy, I knew him not. How

[1] I thank you, good wife.

dost thou, good Ralph? I am glad to see thee well.

Ralph. I would to God you saw me, dame, as well
As when I went from London into France.

Wife. Trust me, I am sorry, Ralph, to see thee impotent. Lord, how the wars have made him sunburnt! The left leg is not well. . . .

Ralph. I am glad to see you well and I rejoice
To hear that God hath blest my master so Since my departure.

Wife. Yea, truly, Ralph, I thank my Maker; but let that pass.

Hodge. And, sirrah Ralph, what news, what news in France?

Ralph. Tell me, good Roger, first, what news in England?
How does my Jane? When didst thou see my wife?
Where lives my poor heart? She'll be poor indeed,
Now I want limbs to get whereon to feed.

Hodge. Limbs? Hast thou not hands, man? Thou shalt never see a shoemaker want bread, though he have but three fingers on a hand.

Ralph. Yet all this while I hear not of my Jane.

Wife. O Ralph, your wife,—perdy, we know not what's become of her. She was here a while, and because she was married, grew more stately than became her; I checked her, and so forth; away she flung, never returned, nor said bye nor bah; and, Ralph, you know, "ka me, ka thee."[1] And so, as I tell ye—Roger, is not Firk come yet?

Hodge. No, forsooth.

Wife. And so, indeed, we heard not of her, but I hear she lives in London; but let that pass. If she had wanted, she might have opened her case to me or my husband, or to any of my men; I am sure, there's not any of them, perdy, but would have done her good to his power. Hans, look if Firk be come.

Hans. Yaw, ik sal, vro. (*Exit*)

Wife. And so, as I said—but, Ralph, why dost thou weep? Thou knowest that naked we came out of our mother's womb, and naked we must return; and, therefore, thank God for all things.

Hodge. No, faith, Jane is a stranger here; but, Ralph, pull up a good heart; I know thou hast one. Thy wife, man, is in London; one told me, he saw her a while ago very brave and neat; we'll ferret her out, an' London hold her.

Wife. Alas, poor soul, he's overcome with sorrow; he does but as I do, weep for the loss of any good thing. But, Ralph, get thee in, call for some meat and drink; thou shalt find me worshipful towards thee.

Ralph. I thank you, dame; since I want limbs and lands,
I'll trust to God, my good friends, and my hands. (*Exit*)

(*Enter* HANS *and* FIRK *running*)

Firk. Run, good Hans! O Hodge, O mistress! Hodge, heave up thine ears; mistress, smug up your looks; on with your best apparel; my master is chosen, my master is called, nay, condemned by the cry of the country to be sheriff of the city for this famous year now to come. And time now being, a great many men in black gowns were asked for their voices and their hands and my master had all their fists about his ears presently, and they cried "Ay, ay, ay, ay,"—and so I came away—

Wherefore without all other grieve
I do salute you, Mistress Shrieve.

Hans. Yaw, my mester is de groot man, de shrieve.

Hodge. Did not I tell you mistress? Now I may boldly say: Good-morrow to your worship.

Wife. Good-morrow, good Roger. I

[1] help me, help thee

thank you, my good people all.—Firk, hold up thy hand: here's a three-penny piece for thy tidings.

Firk. 'Tis but three-half-pence, I think. Yes, 'tis three-pence, I smell the rose.[1]

Hodge. But, mistress, be ruled by me, and do not speak so pulingly.

Firk. 'Tis her worship speaks so, and not she. No, faith, mistress, speak me in the old key: "To it, Firk," "there, good Firk," "ply your business, Hodge," "Hodge, with a full mouth," "I'll fill your bellies with good cheer, till they cry twang."

(*Enter* EYRE *wearing a gold chain*)

Hans. See, myn liever broder, heer compt my meester.

Wife. Welcome home, Master Shrieve; I pray God continue you in health and wealth.

Eyre. See here, my Maggy, a chain, a gold chain for Simon Eyre. I shall make thee a lady; here's a French hood for thee; on with it, on with it! dress thy brows with this flap of a shoulder of mutton, to make thee look lovely. Where be my fine men? Roger, I'll make over my shop and tools to thee; Firk, thou shalt be the foreman; Hans, thou shalt have an hundred for twenty. Be as mad knaves as your master Sim Eyre hath been, and you shall live to be Sheriffs of London.—How dost thou like me, Margery? Prince am I none, yet am I princely born. Firk, Hodge, and Hans.

All Three. Ay, forsooth, what says your worship, Master Sheriff?

Eyre. Worship and honor, you Babylonion knaves, for the gentle craft. But I forgot myself; I am bidden by my lord mayor to dinner to Old Ford; he's gone before, I must after. Come, Madge, on with your trinkets! Now, my true Trojans, my fine Firk, my dapper Hodge, my honest Hans, some device, some odd crotchets, some morris, or such like, for the honor of the gentlemen shoemakers. Meet me at Old Ford; you know my mind. Come, Madge, away. Shut up the shop, knaves, and make holiday.

(*Exeunt*)

Firk. O rare! O brave! Come, Hodge; follow me, Hans; we'll be with them for a morris-dance. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE V: *A Room at Old Ford*

(*Enter the* LORD MAYOR, ROSE, EYRE, *his* WIFE *in a French hood,* SYBIL, *and other Servants*)

L. Mayor. Trust me, you are as welcome to Old Ford
As I myself.

Wife. Truly, I thank your lordship.

L. Mayor. Would our bad cheer were worth the thanks you give.

Eyre. Good cheer, my lord mayor, fine cheer! A fine house, fine walls, all fine and neat.

L. Mayor. Now, by my troth, I'll tell thee, Master Eyre,
It does me good, and all my brethren,
That such a madcap fellow as thyself
Is entered into our society.

Wife. Ay, but, my lord, he must learn now to put on gravity.

Eyre. Peace, Maggy, a fig for gravity! When I go to Guildhall in my scarlet gown, I'll look as demurely as a saint, and speak as gravely as a justice of peace; but now I am here at Old Ford, at my good lord mayor's house, let it go by, vanish, Maggy, I'll be merry; away with flip-flap, these fooleries, these gulleries. What, honey? Prince am I none, yet am I princely born. What says my lord mayor?

L. Mayor. Ha, ha, ha! I had rather than a thousand pound, I had an heart but half so light as yours.

Eyre. Why, what should I do, my

[1] The threepenny piece had a rose on the back.

lord? A pound of care pays not a dram of debt. Hum, let's be merry, whiles we are young; old age, sack and sugar will steal upon us, ere we be aware.

THE FIRST THREE-MEN'S SONG

O the month of May, the merry month of May,
So frolick, so gay, and so green, so green, so green!
O, and then did I unto my true love say:
"Sweet Peg, thou shalt be my summer's queen!

"Now the nightingale, the pretty nightingale,
The sweetest singer in all the forest's choir,
Entreats thee, sweet Peggy, to hear thy true love's tale;
Lo, yonder she sitteth, her breast against a brier.

"But O, I spy the cuckoo, the cuckoo, the cuckoo;
See where she sitteth: come away, my joy;
Come away, I prithee: I do not like the cuckoo
Should sing where my Peggy and I kiss and toy."

O the month of May, the merry month of May,
So frolick, so gay, and so green, so green, so green!
And then did I unto my true love say:
"Sweet Peg, thou shalt be my summer's queen!"

L. Mayor. It's well done; Mistress Eyre, pray, give good counsel
To my daughter.

Wife. I hope Mistress Rose will have the grace to take nothing that's bad.

L. Mayor. Pray God she do; for i' faith, Mistress Eyre,
I would bestow upon that peevish girl
A thousand marks more than I mean to give her,
Upon condition she'd be ruled by me;
The ape still crosseth me. There came of late
A proper gentleman of fair revenues,
Whom gladly I would call son-in-law:
But my fine cockney would have none of him.—
You'll prove a coxcomb for it, ere you die:
A courtier, or no man must please your eye.

Eyre. Be ruled, sweet Rose: th'art ripe for a man. Marry not with a boy that has no more hair on his face than thou hast on thy cheeks. A courtier, wash, go by, stand not upon pishery-pashery: those silken fellows are but painted images, outsides, outsides, Rose; their inner linings are torn. No, my fine mouse, marry me with a gentleman grocer like my lord mayor, your father; a grocer is a sweet trade: plums, plums. Had I a son or daughter should marry out of the generation and blood of the shoemakers, he should pack; what, the gentle trade is a living for a man through Europe, through the world.

(*A noise within of a tabor and a pipe*)

L. Mayor. What noise is this?

Eyre. O my lord mayor, a crew of good fellows that for love to your honor are come hither with a morris-dance. Come in, my Mesopotamians, cheerily.

(*Enter* HODGE, HANS, RALPH, FIRK, *and other Shoemakers, in a morris; after a little dancing the* LORD MAYOR *speaks.*)

L. Mayor. Master Eyre, are all these shoemakers?

Eyre. All cordwainers, my good lord mayor.

Rose. (*Aside*) How like my Lacy looks yond' shoemaker!

Hans. (*Aside*) O that I durst but speak unto my love!

L. Mayor. Sybil, go fetch some wine to make these drink.
You are all welcome.

All. We thank your lordship.

(Rose *takes a cup of wine and goes to* Hans)

Rose. For his sake whose fair shape thou represent'st,
Good friend, I drink to thee.

Hans. Ic bedancke, good frister.[1]

Wife. I see, Mistress Rose, you do not want judgment; you have drunk to the properest man I keep.

Firk. Here be some have done their parts to be as proper as he.

L. Mayor. Well, urgent business calls me back to London:
Good fellows, first go in and taste our cheer;
And to make merry as you homeward go,
Spend these two angels [2] in beer at Stratford-Bow.

Eyre. To these two, my mad lads, Sim Eyre adds another; then cheerily, Firk; tickle it, Hans, and all for the honor of shoemakers.

(*All go dancing out*)

L. Mayor. Come, Master Eyre, let's have your company.

(*Exeunt*)

Rose. Sybil, what shall I do?

Sybil. Why, what's the matter?

Rose. That Hans the shoemaker is my love Lacy,
Disguised in that attire to find me out.
How should I find the means to speak with him?

Sybil. What, mistress, never fear; I dare venture my maidenhead to nothing, and that's great odds, that Hans the Dutchman, when we come to London, shall not only see and speak with you, but in spite of all your father's policies steal you away and marry you. Will not this please you?

Rose. Do this, and ever be assured of my love.

Sybil. Away, then, and follow your father to London, lest your absence cause him to suspect something:
To-morrow, if my counsel be obeyed,
I'll bind you prentice to the gentle trade.

(*Exeunt*)

ACT IV

Scene I: *A Street in London*

(Jane *in a Seamster's shop, working; enter* Master Hammon, *muffled at another door; he stands aloof*)

Ham. Yonder's the shop, and there my fair love sits.
She's fair and lovely, but she is not mine.
O, would she were! Thrice have I courted her,
Thrice hath my hand been moistened with her hand,
Whilst my poor famished eyes do feed on that
Which made them famish. I am infortunate:
I still love one, yet nobody loves me.
I muse, in other men what women see,
That I so want! Fine Mistress Rose was coy,
And this too curious! Oh, no, she is chaste,
And for she thinks me wanton, she denies
To cheer my cold heart with her sunny eyes.
How prettily she works, oh pretty hand!
Oh happy work! It doth me good to stand
Unseen to see her. Thus I oft have stood
In frosty evenings, a light burning by her,
Enduring biting cold, only to eye her.
One only look hath seemed as rich to me
As a king's crown; such is love's lunacy.

[1] Thank you, dear girl. [2] gold coins worth ten shillings

Muffled I'll pass along, and by that try
Whether she know me.
Jane. Sir, what is't you buy?
What is't you lack, sir, calico, or lawn,
Fine cambric shirts, or bands, what will you buy?
Ham. (*Aside*) That which thou wilt not sell. Faith, yet I'll try:
How do you sell this handkercher?
Jane. Good cheap.
Ham. And how these ruffs?
Jane. Cheap too.
Ham. And how this band?
Jane. Cheap too.
Ham. All cheap; how sell you then this hand?
Jane. My hands are not to be sold.
Ham. To be given then!
Nay, faith, I come to buy.
Jane. But none knows when.
Ham. Good sweet, leave work a little while; let's play.
Jane. I cannot live by keeping holiday.
Ham. I'll pay you for the time which shall be lost.
Jane. With me you shall not be at so much cost.
Ham. Look, how you wound this cloth, so you wound me.
Jane. It may be so.
Ham. 'Tis so.
Jane. What remedy?
Ham. Nay, faith, you are too coy.
Jane. Let go my hand.
Ham. I will do any task at your command,
I would let go this beauty, were I not
In mind to disobey you by a power
That controls kings: I love you!
Jane. So, now part.
Ham. With hands I may, but never with my heart.
In faith, I love you.
Jane. I believe you do.
Ham. Shall a true love in me breed hate in you?
Jane. I hate you not.
Ham. Then you must love?
Jane. I do.
What, are you better now? I love not you.
Ham. All this, I hope, is but a woman's fray,
That means: come to me, when she cries: away!
In earnest, mistress, I do not jest,
A true chaste love hath entered in my breast.
I love you dearly, as I love my life,
I love you as a husband loves a wife;
That, and no other love, my love requires.
Thy wealth, I know, is little; my desires
Thirst not for gold. Sweet, beauteous Jane, what's mine
Shall, if you make myself thine, all be thine.
Say, judge, what is thy sentence, life or death?
Mercy or cruelty lies in thy breath.
Jane. Good sir, I do believe you love me well;
For 'tis a silly conquest, silly pride
For one like you—I mean a gentleman—
To boast that by his love-tricks he hath brought
Such and such women to his amorous lure;
I think you do not so, yet many do,
And make it even a very trade to woo.
I could be coy, as many women be,
Feed you with sunshine smiles and wanton looks,
But I detest witchcraft; say that I
Do constantly believe you constant, have—
Ham. Why dost thou not believe me?
Jane. I believe you;
But yet, good sir, because I will not grieve you
With hopes to taste fruit which will never fall,
In simple truth this is the sum of all:

My husband lives,—at least, I hope he lives.
Pressed was he to these bitter wars in France;
Bitter they are to me by wanting him.
I have but one heart, and that heart's his due.
How can I then bestow the same on you?
Whilst he lives, his I live, be it ne'er so poor,
And rather be his wife than a king's whore.
Ham. Chaste and dear woman, I will not abuse thee,
Although it cost my life, if thou refuse me.
Thy husband, pressed for France, what was his name?
Jane. Ralph Damport.
Ham. Damport?—Here's a letter sent
From France to me, from a dear friend of mine,
A gentleman of place; here he doth write
Their names that have been slain in every fight.
Jane. I hope death's scroll contains not my love's name.
Ham. Cannot you read?
Jane. I can.
Ham. Peruse the same.
To my remembrance such a name I read
Amongst the rest. See here.
Jane. Ay me, he's dead!
He's dead! if this be true, my dear heart's slain!
Ham. Have patience, dear love.
Jane. Hence, hence!
Ham. Nay, sweet Jane,
Make not poor sorrow proud with these rich tears.
I mourn thy husband's death, because thou mourn'st.
Jane. That bill is forged; 'tis signed by forgery.
Ham. I'll bring thee letters sent besides to many,
Carrying the like report: Jane, 'tis too true.
Come, weep not: mourning, though it rise from love,
Helps not the mourned, yet hurts them that mourn.
Jane. For God's sake, leave me.
Ham. Whither dost thou turn?
Forget the dead, love them that are alive;
His love is faded, try how mine will thrive.
Jane. 'Tis now no time for me to think on love.
Ham. 'Tis now best time for you to think on love,
Because your love lives not.
Jane. Though he be dead,
My love to him shall not be buried;
For God's sake, leave me to myself alone.
Ham. 'Twould kill my soul, to leave thee drowned in moan.
Answer me to my suit, and I am gone;
Say to me yea or no.
Jane. No.
Ham. Then farewell!
One farewell will not serve, I come again;
Come, dry these wet cheeks; tell me, faith, sweet Jane,
Yea or no, once more.
Jane. Once more I say: no;
Once more be gone, I pray; else will I go.
Ham. Nay, then I will grow rude, by this white hand,
Until you change that cold "no"; here I'll stand
Till by your hard heart—
Jane. Nay, for God's love, peace!
My sorrows by your presence more increase.
Not that you thus are present, but all grief
Desires to be alone; therefore in brief
Thus much I say, and saying bid adieu:
If ever I wed man, it shall be you.
Ham. O blessed voice! Dear Jane, I'll urge no more,
Thy breath hath made me rich.
Jane. Death makes me poor.
(*Exeunt*)

SCENE II: *London,—a Street before* HODGE'S *Shop*

(HODGE, *at his shop-board,* RALPH, FIRK, HANS, *and a boy at work*)

All. Hey, down a down, down derry.

Hodge. Well said, my hearts; ply your work to-day; we loitered yesterday; to it pell-mell, that we may live to be lord mayors, or aldermen at least.

Firk. Hey, down a down, derry.

Hodge. Well said, i' faith! How say'st thou, Hans, doth not Firk tickle it?

Hans. Yaw, mester.

Firk. Not so neither, my organ-pipe squeaks this morning for want of liquoring. Hey, down a down, derry!

Hans. Forward, Firk, tow best un jolly yongster. Hort, I, mester, ic bid you, cut me un pair vampres vor Mester Jeffres boots.

Hodge. Thou shalt, Hans.

Firk. Master!

Hodge. How now, boy?

Firk. Pray, now you are in the cutting vein, cut me out a pair of counterfeits,[1] or else my work will not pass current; hey, down a down!

Hodge. Tell me, sirs, are my cousin Mrs. Priscilla's shoes done?

Firk. Your cousin? No, master; one of your aunts, hang her; let them alone.

Ralph. I am in hand with them; she gave charge that none but I should do them for her.

Firk. Thou do for her? Then 'twill be a lame doing, and that she loves not. Ralph, thou might'st have sent her to me; in faith, I would have yearkt and firked your Priscilla. Hey, down a down, derry. This gear will not hold.

Hodge. How say'st thou, Firk, were we not merry at Old Ford?

Firk. How, merry? why, our buttocks went jiggy-joggy like a quagmire. Well, Sir Roger Oatmeal, if I thought all meal of that nature, I would eat nothing but bag-puddings.

Ralph. Of all good fortunes my fellow Hans had the best.

Firk. 'Tis true, because Mistress Rose drank to him.

Hodge. Well, well, work apace. They say, seven of the aldermen be dead, or very sick.

Firk. I care not, I'll be none.

Ralph. No, nor I; but then my Master Eyre will come quickly to be lord mayor.

(*Enter* SYBIL)

Firk. Whoop, yonder comes Sybil.

Hodge. Sybil, welcome, i' faith; and how dost thou, mad wench?

Firk. Syb, welcome to London.

Sybil. Godamercy, sweet Firk; good lord, Hodge, what a delicious shop you have got! You tickle it, i'faith.

Ralph. Godamercy, Sybil, for our good cheer at Old Ford.

Sybil. That you shall have, Ralph.

Firk. Nay, by the mass, we had tickling cheer, Sybil; and how the plague dost thou and Mistress Rose and my lord mayor? I put the women in first.

Sybil. Well, Godamercy; but God's me, I forget myself, where's Hans the Fleming?

Firk. Hark, butter-box, now you must yelp out some *spreken.*

Hans. Wat begaie you?[2] *Vat vod you, Frister?*

Sybil. Marry, you must come to my young mistress, to pull on her shoes you made last.

Hans. Vare ben your egle fro,[3] *vare ben your mistris?*

Sybil. Marry, here at our London house in Cornhill.

Firk. Will nobody serve her turn but Hans?

[1] duplicates; or possibly a part of a shoe.

[2] What do you want?

[3] Where is your noble lady?

Sybil. No, sir. Come, Hans, I stand upon needles.

Hodge. Why then, Sybil, take heed of pricking.

Sybil. For that let me alone. I have a trick in my budget. Come, Hans.

Hans. Yaw, yaw, ic sall meete you gane.[1]

(*Exit* HANS *and* SYBIL)

Hodge. Go, Hans, make haste again. Come, who lacks work?

Firk. I, master, for I lack my breakfast; 'tis munching-time, and past.

Hodge. Is't so? Why, then leave work, Ralph. To breakfast! Boy, look to the tools. Come, Ralph; come, Firk.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE III: *The Same*

(*Enter a* SERVING-MAN)

Serv. Let me see now, the sign of the Last in Tower Street. Mass, yonder's the house. What, haw! Who's within?

(*Enter* RALPH)

Ralph. Who calls there? What want you, sir?

Serv. Marry, I would have a pair of shoes made for a gentlewoman against to-morrow morning. What, can you do them?

Ralph. Yes, sir, you shall have them. But what length's her foot?

Serv. Why, you must make them in all parts like this shoe; but, at any hand, fail not to do them, for the gentlewoman is to be married very early in the morning.

Ralph. How? By this shoe must it be made? By this? Are you sure, sir, by this?

Serv. How, by this? Am I sure, by this? Art thou in thy wits? I tell thee, I must have a pair of shoes, dost thou mark me? A pair of shoes, two shoes, made by this very shoe, this same shoe, against to-morrow morning by four a clock. Dost understand me? Canst thou do't?

Ralph. Yes, sir, yes—I—I—I can do't. By this shoe, you say? I should know this shoe. Yes, sir, yes, by this shoe, I can do't. Four a clock, well. Whither shall I bring them?

Serv. To the sign of the Golden Ball in Watling Street; enquire for one Master Hammon, a gentleman, my master.

Ralph. Yea, sir; by this shoe, you say?

Serv. I say, Master Hammon at the Golden Ball; he's the bridegroom, and those shoes are for his bride.

Ralph. They shall be done by this shoe; well, well. Master Hammon at the Golden Shoe—I would say, the Golden Ball; very well, very well. But I pray you, sir, where must Master Hammon be married?

Serv. At Saint Faith's Church, under Paul's. But what's that to thee? Prithee, dispatch those shoes, and so farewell.

(*Exit*)

Ralph. By this shoe, said he. How am I amazed
At this strange accident! Upon my life,
This was the very shoe I gave my wife,
When I was pressed for France; since when, alas!
I never could hear of her: it is the same,
And Hammon's bride no other but my Jane.

(*Enter* FIRK)

Firk. 'Snails, Ralph, thou hast lost thy part of three pots, a countryman of mine gave me to breakfast.

Ralph. I care not; I have found a better thing.

Ferk. A thing? Away! Is it a man's thing, or a woman's thing?

Ralph. Firk, dost thou know this shoe?

Firk. No, by my troth: neither doth

[1] with you go

that know me! I have no acquaintance with it; 'tis a mere stranger to me.

Ralph. Why, then I do; this shoe, I durst be sworn,
Once covered the instep of my Jane.
This is her size, her breadth, thus trod my love;
These true-love knots I pricked; I hold my life,
By this old shoe I shall find out my wife.

Firk. Ha, ha! Old shoe, that wert new! How a murrain came this ague-fit of foolishness upon thee?

Ralph. Thus, Firk: even now here came a serving-man;
By this shoe would he have a new pair made
Against to-morrow morning for his mistress,
That's to be married to a gentleman.
And why may not this be my sweet Jane?

Firk. And why may'st not thou be my sweet ass? Ha, ha!

Ralph. Well, laugh and spare not!
But the truth is this:
Against to-morrow morning I'll provide
A lusty crew of honest shoemakers,
To watch the going of the bride to church.
If she prove Jane, I'll take her in despite
From Hammon and the devil, were he by.
If it be not my Jane, what remedy?
Hereof am I sure, I shall live till I die,
Although I never with a woman lie.
(*Exit*)

Firk. Thou lie with a woman to build nothing but Cripple-gates! Well, God sends fools fortune, and it may be, he may light upon his matrimony by such a device; for wedding and hanging goes by destiny. (*Exit*)

SCENE IV: *London,—A Room in the Lord Mayor's House*

(*Enter* HANS *and* ROSE, *arm in arm*)

Hans. How happy am I by embracing thee!
Oh, I did fear such cross mishaps did reign,
That I should never see my Rose again.

Rose. Sweet Lacy, since fair opportunity
Offers herself to further our escape,
Let not too over-fond esteem of me
Hinder that happy hour. Invent the means,
And Rose will follow thee through all the world.

Hans. Oh, how I surfeit with excess of joy,
Made happy by thy rich perfection!
But since thou pay'st sweet interest to my hopes,
Redoubling love on love, let me once more
Like to a bold-faced debtor crave of thee,
This night to steal abroad, and at Eyre's house,
Who now by death of certain aldermen
Is mayor of London, and my master once,
Meet thou thy Lacy, where in spite of change,
Your father's anger, and mine uncle's hate,
Our happy nuptials will we consummate.

(*Enter* SYBIL)

Sybil. Oh God, what will you do, mistress? Shift for yourself; your father is at hand! He's coming, he's coming! Master Lacy, hide yourself in my mistress! For God's sake, shift for yourselves!

Hans. Your father come, sweet Rose —what shall I do?
Where shall I hide me? How shall I escape?

Rose. A man, and want wit in extremity?
Come, come, be Hans still, play the shoemaker,
Pull on my shoe.

(*Enter the* Lord Mayor)

Hans. Mass, and that's well remembered.

Sybil. Here comes your father.

Hans. Forware,[1] *metresse, 'tis un good skow, it sal vel dute,*[2] *or ye sal neit betallen.*[3]

Rose. Oh God, it pincheth me; what will you do?

Hans. (*Aside*) Your father's presence pincheth, not the shoe.

L. Mayor. Well done; fit my daughter well, and she shall please thee well.

Hans. Yaw, yaw, ick weit[4] *dat well; forware, 'tis un good skoo, 'tis gimait van neits leither;*[5] *se ever, mine here.*

(*Enter a Prentice*)

L. Mayor. I do believe it.—What's the news with you?

Prentice. Please you, the Earl of Lincoln at the gate
Is newly 'lighted, and would speak with you.

L. Mayor. The Earl of Lincoln come to speak with me?
Well, well, I know his errand. Daughter Rose,
Send hence your shoemaker, dispatch, have done!
Syb, make things handsome! Sir boy, follow me. (*Exit*)

Hans. Mine uncle come! Oh, what may this portend?
Sweet Rose, this of our love threatens an end.

Rose. Be not dismayed at this; whate'er befall,
Rose is thine own. To witness I speak truth,
Where thou appoint'st the place, I'll meet with thee.
I will not fix a day to follow thee,
But presently steal hence. Do not reply:
Love which gave strength to bear my father's hate,
Shall now add wings to further our escape.
(*Exeunt*)

[1] truly
[2] do it,—i.e. wear
[3] pay
[4] know
[5] 'tis made of neats' leather

Scene V: *Another Room in the same House*

(*Enter the* Lord Mayor *and the* Earl of Lincoln)

L. Mayor. Believe me, on my credit, I speak truth:
Since first your nephew Lacy went to France,
I have not seen him. It seemed strange to me,
When Dodger told me that he stayed behind,
Neglecting the high charge the king imposed.

Lincoln. Trust me, Sir Roger Oateley, I did think
Your counsel had given head to this attempt,
Drawn to it by the love he bears your child.
Here I did hope to find him in your house;
But now I see mine error, and confess,
My judgment wronged you by conceiving so.

L. Mayor. Lodge in my house, say you? Trust me, my lord,
I love your nephew Lacy too too dearly,
So much to wrong his honour; and he hath done so,
That first gave him advice to stay from France.
To witness I speak truth, I let you know,
How careful I have been to keep my daughter
Free from all conference or speech of him;
Not that I scorn your nephew, but in love
I bear your honour, lest your noble blood
Should by my mean worth be dishonoured

Lincoln. (*Aside*) How far the churl's tongue wanders from his heart!
Well, well, Sir Roger Oateley, I believe you,
With more than many thanks for the kind love,
So much you seem to bear me. But, my lord,
Let me request your help to seek my nephew,
Whom if I find, I'll straight embark [1] for France.
So shall your Rose be free, my thoughts at rest,
And much care die which now lies in my breast.

(*Enter* SYBIL)

Sybil. Oh Lord! Help, for God's sake! My mistress! Oh, my young mistress!

L. Mayor. Where is thy mistress? What's become of her?

Sybil. She's gone, she's fled!

L. Mayor. Gone! Whither is she fled?

Sybil. I know not, forsooth; she's fled out of doors with Hans the shoemaker; I saw them scud, scud, scud, apace, apace!

L. Mayor. Which way? What, John! Where be my men? Which way?

Sybil. I know not, an it please your worship.

L. Mayor. Fled with a shoemaker? Can this be true?

Sybil. Oh Lord, sir, as true as God's in Heaven.

Lincoln. Her love turned shoemaker? I am glad of this.

L. Mayor. A Fleming butter-box, a shoemaker!
Will she forget her birth, requite my care
With such ingratitude? Scorned she young Hammon
To love a honniken, a needy knave?
Well, let her fly, I'll not fly after her,
Let her starve, if she will; she's none of mine.

Lincoln. Be not so cruel, sir.

(*Enter* FIRK *with shoes*)

Sybil. I am glad she's 'scaped.

L. Mayor. I'll not account of her as of my child.
Was there no better object for her eyes
But a foul drunken lubber, swill-belly,
A shoemaker? That's brave!

Firk. Yea, forsooth; 'tis a very brave shoe, and as fit as a pudding.

L. Mayor. How now, what knave is this? From whence comest thou?

Firk. No knave, sir. I am Firk the shoemaker, lusty Roger's chief lusty journeyman, and I have come hither to take up the pretty leg of sweet Mistress Rose, and thus hoping your worship is in as good health, as I was at the making hereof, I bid you farewell, yours, Firk.

L. Mayor. Stay, stay, Sir Knave!

Lincoln. Come hither, shoemaker!

Firk. 'Tis happy the knave is put before the shoemaker, or else I would not have vouchsafed to come back to you. I am moved, for I stir.

L. Mayor. My lord, this villain calls us knaves by craft.

Firk. Then 'tis by the gentle craft, and to call one knave gently, is no harm. Sit your worship merry? Syb, your young mistress—I'll so bob them, now my Master Eyre is lord mayor of London.

L. Mayor. Tell me, sirrah, whose man are you?

Firk. I am glad to see your worship so merry. I have no maw to this gear, no stomach as yet to a red petticoat.
(*Pointing to* SYBIL)

Lincoln. He means not, sir, to woo you to his maid,
But only doth demand whose man you are.

[1] cause to embark

Firk. I sing now to the tune of Rogero. Roger, my fellow, is now my master.

Lincoln. Sirrah, know'st thou one Hans, a shoemaker?

Firk. Hans, shoemaker? Oh yes, stay, yes, I have him. I tell you what, I speak it in secret: Mistress Rose and he are by this time—no, not so, but shortly are to come over one another with "Can you dance the shaking of the sheets?" It is that Hans—(*Aside*). I'll so gull [1] these diggers!

L. Mayor. Know'st thou, then, where he is?

Firk. Yes, forsooth; yea, marry!

Lincoln. Canst thou, in sadness—

Firk. No, forsooth; no, marry!

L. Mayor. Tell me, good honest fellow, where he is,
And thou shalt see what I'll bestow on thee.

Firk. Honest fellow? No, sir; not so, sir; my profession is the gentle craft; I care not for seeing, I love feeling; let me feel it here; *aurium tenus,* ten pieces of gold, *genuum tenus,* ten pieces of silver; and then Firk is your man in a new pair of stretchers.[2]

L. Mayor. Here is an angel, part of thy reward,
Which I will give thee; tell me where he is.

Firk. No point! Shall I betray my brother? No! Shall I prove Judas to Hans? No! Shall I cry treason to my corporation? No, I shall be firked and yerked then. But give me your angel; your angel shall tell you.

Lincoln. Do so, good fellow; 'tis no hurt to thee.

Firk. Send simpering Syb away.

L. Mayor. Huswife, get you in.
(*Exit* SYBIL)

Firk. Pitchers have ears, and maids have wide mouths; but for Hans Prauns, upon my word, to-morrow morning he and young Mistress Rose go to this gear: they shall be married together, by this rush, or else turn Firk to a firkin of butter, to tan leather withal.

L. Mayor. But art thou sure of this?

Firk. Am I sure that Paul's steeple is a handful higher than London Stone, or that the . . . Conduit leaks nothing but pure Mother Bunch? [3] Am I sure I am lusty Firk? God's nails, do you think I am so base to gull you?

Lincoln. Where are they married? Dost thou know the church?

Firk. I never go to church, but I know the name of it; it is a swearing church—stay a while, 'tis—ay, by the mass, no, no,—'tis—ay, by my troth, no, nor that; 'tis—ay by my faith, that, that, 'tis, ay, by my Faith's Church under Paul's Cross. There they shall be knit like a pair of stockings in matrimony; there they'll be inconie.[4]

Lincoln. Upon my life, my nephew Lacy walks
In the disguise of this Dutch shoemaker.

Firk. Yes, forsooth.

Lincoln. Doth he not, honest fellow?

Firk. No, forsooth; I think Hans is nobody but Hans, no spirit.

L. Mayor. My mind misgives me now; 'tis so, indeed.

Lincoln. My cousin speaks the language, knows the trade.

L. Mayor. Let me request your company, my lord;
Your honorable presence may, no doubt,
Refrain their headstrong rashness, when myself
Going alone perchance may be o'erborne.
Shall I request this favor?

Lincoln. This, or what else.

[1] fool

[2] lies

[3] The name given to Mistress Miniver, an alewife, in Dekker's *Satiromastix.*

[4] sweet, delicate (a cant term of endearment)

Firk. Then you must rise betimes, for they men to fall to their hey-pass and repass, pindy-pandy, which hand will you have, very early.

L. Mayor. My care shall every way equal their haste.
This night accept your lodging in my house;
The earlier shall we stir, and at Saint Faith's
Prevent this giddy hare-brained nuptial.
This traffic of hot love shall yield cold gains:
They ban our loves, and we'll forbid their banns. (*Exit*)

Lincoln. At Saint Faith's Church thou say'st?

Firk. Yes, by their troth.

Lincoln. Be secret, on thy life.

(*Exit*)

Firk. Yes, when I kiss your wife! Ha, ha, here's no craft in the gentle craft. I came hither of purpose with shoes to Sir Roger's worship, whilst Rose, his daughter, be cony-catched by Hans. Soft now; these two gulls will be at Saint Faith's Church to-morrow morning, to take Master Bridegroom and Mistress Bride napping, and they, in the mean time, shall chop up the matter at the Savoy. But the best sport is, Sir Roger Oateley will find my fellow lame Ralph's wife going to marry a gentleman, and then he'll stop her instead of his daughter. Oh brave! there will be fine tickling sport. Soft now, what have I to do? Oh, I know; now a mess of shoemakers meet at the Woolsack [1] in Ivy Lane, to cozen my gentleman of lame Ralph's wife, that's true.

Alack, alack!
Girls, hold out tack!
For now smocks for this jumbling
Shall go to wrack.

(*Exit*)

[1] An ordinary of low repute.

ACT V

Scene I: *A Room in Eyre's House*

(*Enter* Eyre, *his* Wife, Hans, *and* Rose)

Eyre. This is the morning, then; stay, my bully, my honest Hans, is it not?

Hans. This is the morning that must make us two happy or miserable; therefore, if you—

Eyre. Away with these *ifs* and *ands*, Hans, and these *et cæteras!* By mine honor, Rowland Lacy, none but the king shall wrong thee. Come, fear nothing. Am not I Sim Eyre? Is not Sim Eyre Lord Mayor of London? Fear nothing, Rose; let them all say what they can; dainty, come thou to me—laughest thou?

Wife. Good my lord, stand her friend in what thing you may.

Eyre. Why, my sweet Lady Madgy, think you Simon Eyre can forget his fine Dutch journeyman! No, vah! Fie, I scorn it, it shall never be cast in my teeth that I was unthankful. Lady Madgy, thou had'st never covered thy Saracen's head with this French flap, nor loaden thy bum with this farthingale, ('tis trash, trumpery, vanity); Simon Eyre had never walked in a red petticoat, nor wore a chain of gold, but for my fine journeyman's Portuguese.—And shall I leave him! No! Prince am I none, yet bear a princely mind.

Hans. My lord, 'tis time for us to part from hence.

Eyre. Lady Madgy, Lady Madgy, take two or three of my pie crust-eaters, my buff-jerkin varlets, that do walk in black gowns at Simon Eyre's heels; take them, good Lady Madgy; trip and go, my brown queen of periwigs, with my delicate Rose and my jolly Rowland to the Savoy; see them linked, countenance the marriage; and when it is done, cling,

cling together, you Hamborow turtle-doves. I'll bear you out; come to Simon Eyre; come, dwell with me, Hans; thou shalt eat minced-pies and marchpane. Rose, away, cricket; trip and go, my Lady Madgy, to the Savoy; Hans, wed, and to bed; kiss, and away! Go, vanish!

Wife. Farewell, my lord.

Rose. Make haste, sweet love.

Wife. She'd fain the deed were done.

HANS. Come, my sweet Rose; faster than deer we'll run.

(*Exeunt* HANS, ROSE, *and* MARGERY)

Eyre. Go, vanish, vanish! Avaunt, I say! By the Lord of Ludgate, it's a mad life to be a lord mayor; it's a stirring life, a fine life, a velvet life, a careful life. Well, Simon Eyre, yet set a good face on it, in the honor of Saint Hugh. Soft, the king this day comes to dine with me, to see my new buildings; his majesty is welcome, he shall have good cheer, delicate cheer, princely cheer. This day, my fellow prentices of London come to dine with me too; they shall have fine cheer, gentlemanlike cheer. I promised the mad Cappadocians when we all served at the Conduit together, that if ever I came to be mayor of London, I would feast them all, and I'll do't, by the life of Pharaoh; by this beard, Sim Eyre will be no flincher. Besides, I have procured that upon every Shrove-Tuesday,[1] at the sound of the pancake bell,[2] my fine dapper Assyrian lads shall clap up their shop windows, and away. This is the day, and this day they shall do't, they shall do't.

Boys, that day are you free, let masters care,
And prentices shall pray for Simon Eyre.

(*Exit*)

[1] The great holiday of the year for 'prentices.

[2] A bell rung on Shrove Tuesday morning. It came to suggest frying pancakes as meat substitutes.

SCENE II: *A Street near St. Faith's Church*

(*Enter* HODGE, FIRK, RALPH, *and five or six Shoemakers, all with cudgels or such weapons*)

Hodge. Come, Ralph; stand to it, Firk. My masters, as we are the brave bloods of the shoemakers, heirs apparent to Saint Hugh, and perpetual benefactors to all good fellows, thou shalt have no wrong; were Hammon a king of spades, he should not delve in thy close without thy sufferance. But tell me, Ralph, art thou sure 'tis thy wife?

Ralph. Am I sure this is Firk? This morning, when I stroked on her shoes, I looked upon her, and she upon me, and sighed, asked me if ever I knew one Ralph. Yes, said I. For his sake, said she—tears standing in her eyes—and for thou art somewhat like him, spend this piece of gold. I took it; my lame leg and my travel beyond sea made me unknown. All is one for that: I know she's mine.

Firk. Did she give thee this gold? O glorious glittering gold! She's thine own, 'tis thy wife, and she loves thee; for I'll stand to't, there's no woman will give gold to any man, but she thinks better of him than she thinks of them she gives silver to. And for Hammon, neither Hammon nor hangman shall wrong thee in London. Is not our old master Eyre lord mayor? Speak, my hearts.

All. Yes, and Hammon shall know it to his cost.

(*Enter* HAMMON, *his* SERVING-MAN, JANE *and Others*)

Hodge. Peace, my bullies; yonder they come.

Ralph. Stand to't, my hearts. Firk, let me speak first.

Hodge. No, Ralph, let me.—Hammon, whither away so early?

Ham. Unmannerly, rude slave, what's that to thee?

Firk. To him, sir? Yes, sir, and to me, and others. Good-morrow, Jane, how dost thou? Good Lord, how the world is changed with you! God be thanked!

Ham. Villains, hands off! How dare you touch my love?

All. Villains? Down with them! Cry clubs for prentices!

Hodge. Hold, my hearts! Touch her, Hammon? Yea, and more than that: we'll carry her away with us. My masters and gentlemen, never draw your bird-spits; shoemakers are steel to the back, men every inch of them, all spirit.

All of Hammon's Side. Well, and what of all this?

Hodge. I'll show you.—Jane, dost thou know this man? 'Tis Ralph, I can tell thee; nay, 'tis he in faith, though he be lamed by the wars. Yet look not strange, but run to him, fold him about the neck and kiss him.

Jane. Lives then my husband? Oh God, let me go,
Let me embrace my Ralph.

Ham. What means my Jane?

Jane. Nay, what meant you, to tell me he was slain?

Ham. Pardon me, dear love, for being misled.
(*To* RALPH) 'Twas rumored here in London thou wert dead.

Firk. Thou seest he lives. Lass, go, pack home with him. Now, Master Hammon, where's your mistress, your wife?

Serv. 'Swounds, master, fight for her! Will you thus lose her?

All. Down with that creature! Clubs! Down with him!

Hodge. Hold, hold!

Ham. Hold, fool! Sirs, he shall do no wrong.
Will my Jane leave me thus, and break her faith?

Firk. Yes, sir! She must, sir! She shall, sir! What then? Mend it!

Hodge. Hark, fellow Ralph, follow my counsel: set the wench in the midst, and let her choose her man, and let her be his woman.

Jane. Whom should I choose? Whom should my thoughts affect
But him whom Heaven hath made to be my love?
Thou art my husband, and these humble weeds
Makes thee more beautiful than all his wealth.
Therefore, I will but put off his attire,
Returning it into the owner's hand,
And after ever be thy constant wife.

Hodge. Not a rag, Jane! The law's on our side; he that sows in another man's ground, forfeits his harvest. Get thee home, Ralph; follow him, Jane; he shall not have so much as a busk-point from thee.

Firk. Stand to that, Ralph; the appurtenances are thine own. Hammon, look not at her!

Serv. O, swounds, no!

Firk. Blue coat, be quiet, we'll give you a new livery else; we'll make Shrove Tuesday Saint George's Day for you. Look not, Hammon, leer not! I'll firk you! For thy head now, one glance, one sheep's eye, anything, at her! Touch not a rag, lest I and my brethren beat you to clouts.

Serv. Come, Master Hammon, there's no striving here.

Ham. Good fellows, hear me speak; and, honest Ralph,
Whom I have injured most by loving Jane,
Mark what I offer thee: here in fair gold
Is twenty pound, I'll give it for thy Jane;
If this content thee not, thou shalt have more.

Hodge. Sell not thy wife, Ralph; make her not a whore.

Ham. Say, wilt thou freely cease thy claim in her,
And let her be my wife?
All. No, do not, Ralph.
Ralph. Sirrah Hammon, Hammon, dost thou think a shoemaker is so base to be a bawd to his own wife for commodity? Take thy gold, choke with it! Were I not lame, I would make thee eat thy words.
Firk. A shoemaker sell his flesh and blood? Oh indignity!
Hodge. Sirrah, take up your pelf, and be packing.
Ham. I will not touch one penny, but in lieu
Of that great wrong I offered thy Jane,
To Jane and thee I give that twenty pound.
Since I have failed of her, during my life,
I vow no woman else shall be my wife.
Farewell, good fellows of the gentle trade:
Your morning mirth my mourning day hath made. (*Exit*)
Firk. (*To the* SERVING-MAN) Touch the gold, creature, if you dare! Y'are best be trudging. Here, Jane, take thou it. Now let's home, my hearts.
Hodge. Stay! Who comes here? Jane, on again with thy mask!

(*Enter the* EARL OF LINCOLN, *the* LORD MAYOR *and* SERVANTS)

Lincoln. Yonder's the lying varlet mocked us so.
L. Mayor. Come hither, sirrah!
Firk. I, sir? I am sirrah? You mean me, do you not?
Lincoln. Where is my nephew married?
Firk. Is he married? God give him joy, I am glad of it. They have a fair day, and the sign is in a good planet, Mars in Venus.
L. Mayor. Villain, thou toldst me that my daughter Rose
This morning should be married at Saint Faith's;
We have watched there these three hours at the least,
Yet see we no such thing.
Firk. Truly, I am sorry for't; a bride's a pretty thing.
Hodge. Come to the purpose. Yonder's the bride and bridegroom you look for, I hope. Though you be lords, you are not to bar by your authority men from women, are you?
L. Mayor. See, see, my daughter's masked.
Lincoln. True, and my nephew,
To hide his guilt, counterfeits him lame.
Firk. Yea, truly; God help the poor couple, they are lame and blind.
L. Mayor. I'll ease her blindness.
Lincoln. I'll his lameness cure.
Firk. Lie down, sirs, and laugh! My fellow Ralph is taken for Rowland Lacy, and Jane for Mistress Damask Rose. This is all my knavery.
L. Mayor. What, have I found you, minion?
Lincoln. O base wretch!
Nay, hide thy face; the horror of thy guilt
Can hardly be washed off. Where are thy powers?
What battles have you made? O yes, I see,
Thou fought'st with Shame, and Shame hath conquered thee.
This lameness will not serve.
L. Mayor. Unmask yourself.
Lincoln. Lead home your daughter.
L. Mayor. Take your nephew hence.
Ralph. Hence! Swounds, what mean you? Are you mad? I hope you cannot enforce my wife from me. Where's Hammon?
L. Mayor. Your wife?
Lincoln. What, Hammon?
Ralph. Yea, my wife; and, therefore, the proudest of you that lays hands on

her first, I'll lay my crutch 'cross his pate.

Firk. To him, lame Ralph! Here's brave sport!

Ralph. Rose call you her? Why, her name is Jane. Look here else; do you know her now? (*Unmasking* JANE.)

Lincoln. Is this your daughter?

L. Mayor. No, nor this your nephew. My Lord of Lincoln, we are both abused By this base, crafty varlet.

Firk. Yea, forsooth, no varlet; forsooth, no base; forsooth, I am but mean; no crafty neither, but of the gentle craft.

L. Mayor. Where is my daughter Rose? Where is my child?

Lincoln. Where is my nephew Lacy married?

Firk. Why, here is good laced mutton, as I promised you.

Lincoln. Villain, I'll have thee punished for this wrong.

Firk. Punish the journeyman villain, but not the journeyman shoemaker.

(*Enter* DODGER.)

Dodger. My lord, I come to bring unwelcome news.
Your nephew Lacy and your daughter Rose
Early this morning wedded at the Savoy,
None being present but the lady mayoress.
Besides, I learnt among the officers,
The lord mayor vows to stand in their defence
'Gainst any that shall seek to cross the match.

Lincoln. Dares Eyre the shoemaker uphold the deed?

Firk. Yes, sir, shoemakers dare stand in a woman's quarrel, I warrant you, as deep as another, and deeper too.

Dodger. Besides, his grace to-day dines with the mayor;
Who on his knees humbly intends to fall
And beg a pardon for your nephew's fault.

Lincoln. But I'll prevent him! Come, Sir Roger Oateley;
The king will do us justice in this cause.
Howe'er their hands have made them man and wife,
I will disjoin the match, or lose my life.
(*Exeunt*)

Firk. Adieu, Monsieur Dodger! Farewell, fools! Ha, ha! Oh, if they had stayed, I would have so lambed them with flouts! O heart, my codpiecepoint is ready to fly in pieces every time I think upon Mistress Rose; but let that pass, as my lady mayoress says.

Hodge. This matter is answered. Come, Ralph; home with thy wife. Come, my fine shoemakers, let's to our master's the new lord mayor, and there swagger this Shrove-Tuesday. I'll promise you wine enough, for Madge keeps the cellar.

All. O rare! Madge is a good wench.

Firk. And I'll promise you meat enough, for simp'ring Susan keeps the larder. I'll lead you to victuals, my brave soldiers; follow your captain. O brave! Hark, hark!

(*Bell rings*)

All. The pancake-bell rings, the pancake-bell! Tri-lill, my hearts!

Firk. O brave! O sweet bell! O delicate pancakes! Open the doors, my hearts, and shut up the windows! Keep in the house, let out the pancakes! O rare, my hearts! Let's march together for the honor of Saint Hugh to the great new hall in Gracious Streetcorner, which our master, the new lord mayor, hath built.

Ralph. O the crew of good fellows that will dine at my lord mayor's cost to-day!

Hodge. By the Lord, my lord mayor is a most brave man. How shall prentices be bound to pray for him and the honor of the gentlemen shoemakers! Let's feed and be fat with my lord's bounty.

Firk. O musical bell, still! O Hodge, O my brethren; There's cheer for the heavens: venison-pasties walk up and down piping hot, like sergeants; beef and brewess comes marching in dry-vats; fritters and pancakes comes trowling in in wheel-barrows; hens and oranges hopping in porters' baskets, collops[1] and eggs in scuttles, and tarts and custards comes quavering in in malt-shovels.

(*Enter more* PRENTICES)

All. Whoop, look here, look here!

Hodge. How now, mad lads, whither away so fast?

First Prentice. Whither? Why, to the great new hall, know you not why? The lord mayor hath bidden all the prentices in London to breakfast this morning.

All. O brave shoemaker, O brave lord of incomprehensible good-fellowship! Whoo! Hark you! The pancake-bell rings. (*Cast up caps*)

Firk. Nay, more, my hearts! Every Shrove-Tuesday is our year of jubilee; and when the pancake-bell rings, we are as free as my lord mayor; we may shut up our shops, and make holiday. I'll have it called Saint Hugh's Holiday.

All. Agreed, agreed! Saint Hugh's Holiday.

Hodge. And this shall continue for ever.

All. O brave! Come, come, my hearts! Away, away!

Firk. O eternal credit to us of the gentle craft!
March fair, my hearts! O rare!
(*Exeunt*)

SCENE III. *A Street in London*

(*Enter the* KING, *and his* TRAIN *over the stage*)

King. Is our lord mayor of London such a gallant?

Nobleman. One of the merriest madcaps in your land.
Your grace will think, when you behold the man,
He's rather a wild ruffian than a mayor.
Yet thus much I'll ensure your majesty.
In all his actions that concern his state,
He is as serious, provident, and wise,
As full of gravity amongst the grave,
As any mayor hath been these many years.

King. I am with child,[2] till I behold this huff-cap.
But all my doubt[3] is, when we come in presence,
His madness will be dashed clean out of countenance.

Nobleman. It may be so, my liege.

King. Which to prevent,
Let some one give him notice, 'tis our pleasure
That he put on his wonted merriment.
Set forward!

All. On afore! (*Exeunt*)

SCENE IV. *A Great Hall*

(*Enter* EYRE, HODGE, FIRK, RALPH, *and other Shoemakers, all with napkins on their shoulders*)

Eyre. Come, my fine Hodge, my jolly gentlemen shoemakers; soft, where be these cannibals, these varlets, my officers? Let them all walk and wait upon my brethren; for my meaning is, that none but shoemakers, none but the livery of my company shall in their satin hoods wait upon the trencher of my sovereign.

Firk. O my lord, it will be rare!

Eyre. No more, Firk; come, lively! Let your fellow-prentices want no cheer; let wine be plentiful as beer, and beer as water. Hang these penny-pinching fathers, that cram wealth in innocent lamb-skins. Rip, knaves, avaunt! Look to my guests!

[1] slices of meat

[2] impatient

[3] fear

Hodge. My lord, we are at our wits' end for room; those hundred tables will not feast the fourth part of them.

Eyre. Then cover me those hundred tables again, and again, till all my jolly prentices be feasted. Avoid, Hodge! Run, Ralph! Frisk about, my nimble Firk! Carouse me fathom-healths to the honor of the shoemakers. Do they drink lively, Hodge? Do they tickle it, Firk?

Firk. Tickle it? Some of them have taken their liquor standing so long that they can stand no longer; but for meat, they would eat it, and they had it.

Eyre. Want they meat? Where's this swag-belly, this greasy kitchenstuff cook? Call the varlet to me! Want meat? Firk, Hodge, lame Ralph, run, my tall men, beleaguer the shambles, beggar all Eastcheap, serve me whole oxen in chargers and let sheep whine upon the tables like pigs for want of good fellows to eat them. Want meat? Vanish, Firk! Avaunt, Hodge!

Hodge. Your lordship mistakes my man Firk; he means, their bellies want meat, not the boards; for they have drunk so much, they can eat nothing.

THE SECOND THREE-MEN'S SONG

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
  Saint Hugh be our good speed:
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
  Nor helps good hearts in need.

Trowl the bowl, the jolly nut-brown bowl,
  And here, kind mate, to thee:
Let's sing a dirge for Saint Hugh's soul,
  And down it merrily.

Down a down, heydown a down,
    (*Close with the tenor boy*)
  Hey derry derry, down a down!
Ho, well done; to me let come!
  Ring, compass, gentle joy.

Trowl the bowl, the nut-brown bowl,
  And here, kind mate to thee: etc.

(*Repeat as often as there be men to drink; at last when all have drunk, this verse:*)

Cold's the wind, and wet's the rain,
  Saint Hugh be our good speed:
Ill is the weather that bringeth no gain,
  Nor helps good hearts in need.

(*Enter* HANS, ROSE *and* EYRE'S WIFE)

Wife. Where is my lord?

Eyre. How now, Lady Madgy?

Wife. The king's most excellent majesty is new come; he sends me for thy honor; one of his most worshipful peers bade me tell thou must be merry, and so forth; but let that pass.

Eyre. Is my sovereign come? Vanish, my tall shoemakers, my nimble brethren; look to my guests, the prentices. Yet stay a little! How now, Hans? How looks my little Rose?

Hans. Let me request you to remember me.
I know, your honour easily may obtain
Free pardon of the king for me and Rose,
And reconcile me to my uncle's grace.

Eyre. Have done, my good Hans, my honest journeyman; look cheerily! I'll fall upon both my knees, till they be as hard as horn, but I'll get thy pardon.

Wife. Good my lord, have a care what you speak to his grace.

Eyre. Away, you Islington whitepot! [1] hence, you hopperarse! you barley-pudding, full of maggots! you broiled carbonado! [2] avaunt, avaunt, avoid, Mephistophiles! Shall Sim Eyre learn to speak of you, Lady Madgy? Vanish, Mother Minivercap; [3] vanish, go, trip and go; meddle with your partlets [4] and your

[1] rice pudding
[2] meat scored across and broiled
[3] Cf. p. 211, note 3.
[4] neckpieces

pishery-pashery, your flewes and your whirligigs; go, rub, out of mine alley! Sim Eyre knows how to speak to a Pope, to Sultan Soliman, to Tamburlaine, an he were here; and shall I melt, shall I droop before my sovereign? No, come, my Lady Madgy! Follow me, Hans! About your business, my frolic free-booters! Firk, frisk about, and about, and about, for the honor of mad Simon Eyre, lord mayor of London.

Firk. Hey, for the honour of the shoemakers. (*Exeunt*)

SCENE V. *An Open Yard before the Hall*

(*A long flourish, or two. Enter* KING, *Nobles,* EYRE, *his* WIFE, LACY, ROSE. LACY *and* ROSE *kneel.*)

King. Well, Lacy, though the fact was very foul
Of your revolting from our kingly love
And your own duty, yet we pardon you.
Rise both, and, Mistress Lacy, thank my lord mayor
For your young bridegroom here.

Eyre. So, my dear liege, Sim Eyre and my brethren, the gentlemen shoemakers, shall set your sweet majesty's image cheek by jowl by Saint Hugh for this honor you have done poor Simon Eyre. I beseech your grace, pardon my rude behavior; I am a handicraftsman, yet my heart is without craft; I would be sorry at my soul, that my boldness should offend my king.

King. Nay, I pray thee, good lord mayor, be even as merry
As if thou wert among thy shoemakers;
It does me good to see thee in this humor.

Eyre. Say'st thou me so, my sweet Dioclesian? Then, humph! Prince am I none, yet am I princely born. By the Lord of Ludgate, my liege, I'll be as merry as a pie.[1]

[1] magpie

King. Tell me, in faith, mad Eyre, how old thou art.

Eyre. My liege, a very boy, a stripling, a younker;[2] you see not a white hair on my head, not a gray in this beard. Every hair, I assure thy majesty, that sticks in this beard, Sim Eyre values at the King of Babylon's ransom; Tamar Cham's beard was a rubbing brush to't: yet I'll shave it off, and stuff tennis-balls with it, to please my bully king.

King. But all this while I do not know your age.

Eyre. My liege, I am six and fifty year old, yet I can cry *humph!* with a sound heart for the honor of Saint Hugh. Mark this old wench, my king: I danced the shaking of the sheets with her six and thirty years ago, and yet I hope to get two or three young lord mayors, ere I die. I am lusty still, Sim Eyre still. Care and cold lodging brings white hairs. My sweet Majesty, let care vanish, cast it upon thy nobles; it will make thee look always young like Apollo, and cry *humph!* Prince am I none, yet am I princely born.

King. Ha, ha!
Say, Cornwall, didst thou ever see his like?

Cornwall. Not I, my lord.

(*Enter the* EARL OF LINCOLN *and the* LORD MAYOR)

King. Lincoln, what news with you?

Lincoln. My gracious lord, have care unto your self,
For there are traitors here.

All. Traitors? Where? Who?

Eyre. Traitors in my house? God forbid! Where be my officers? I'll spend my soul, ere my king feel harm.

King. Where is the traitor, Lincoln?

Lincoln. Here he stands.

King. Cornwall, lay hold on Lacy!—Lincoln, speak,

[2] stripling

What canst thou lay unto thy nephew's charge?

Lincoln. This, my dear liege: your Grace, to do me honour,
Heaped on the head of this degenerous boy
Desertless favours; you made choice of him,
To be commander over powers in France.
But he——

King. Good Lincoln, prithee, pause a while!
Even in thine eyes I read what thou wouldst speak.
I know how Lacy did neglect our love,
Ran himself deeply, in the highest degree,
Into vile treason——

Lincoln. Is he not a traitor?

King. Lincoln, he was; now have we pardoned him.
'Twas not a base want of true valour's fire,
That held him out of France, but love's desire.

Lincoln. I will not bear his shame upon my back.

King. Nor shalt thou, Lincoln; I forgive you both.

Lincoln. Then, good my liege, forbid the boy to wed
One whose mean birth will much disgrace his bed.

King. Are they not married?

Lincoln. No, my liege.

Both. We are.

King. Shall I divorce them then? O be it far,
That any hand on earth should dare untie
The sacred knot, knit by God's majesty;
I would not for my crown disjoin their hands,
That are conjoined in holy nuptial bands.
How say'st thou, Lacy, wouldst thou lose thy Rose?

Lacy. Not for all India's wealth, my sovereign.

King. But Rose, I am sure, her Lacy would forego?

Rose. If Rose were asked that question, she'd say no.

King. You hear them, Lincoln?

Lincoln. Yea, my liege, I do.

King. Yet canst thou find i'th'heart to part these two?
Who seeks, besides you, to divorce these lovers?

L. Mayor. I do, my gracious lord, I am her father.

King. Sir Roger Oateley, our last mayor, I think?

Nobleman. The same, my liege.

King. Would you offend Love's laws?
Well, you shall have your wills; you sue to me
To prohibit the match. Soft, let me see—
You both are married, Lacy, art thou not?

Lacy. I am, dread sovereign.

King. Then, upon thy life,
I charge thee, not to call this woman wife.

L. Mayor. I thank your grace.

Rose. O my most gracious lord! (*Kneels*)

King. Nay, Rose, never woo me; I tell you true,
Although as yet I am a bachelor,
Yet I believe, I shall not marry you.

Rose. Can you divide the body from the soul,
Yet make the body live?

King. Yea, so profound?
I cannot, Rose, but you I must divide.
This fair maid, bridegroom, cannot be your bride.
Are you pleased, Lincoln? Oateley, are you pleased?

Both. Yes, my lord.

King. Then must my heart be eased;
For, credit me, my conscience lives in pain,
Till these whom I divorced, be joined again.

Lacy, give me thy hand; Rose, lend me thine!
Be what you would be! Kiss now! So, that's fine.
At night, lovers, to bed!—Now, let me see,
Which of you all mislikes this harmony.

L. Mayor. Will you then take from me my child perforce?

King. Why, tell me, Oateley: shines not Lacy's name
As bright in the world's eye as the gay beams
Of any citizen?

Lincoln. Yea, but, my gracious lord,
I do mislike the match far more than he;
Her blood is too too base.

King. Lincoln, no more.
Dost thou not know that love respects no blood,
Cares not for difference of birth or state?
The maid is young, well born, fair, virtuous,
A worthy bride for any gentleman.
Besides, your nephew for her sake did stoop
To bare necessity, and, as I hear,
Forgetting honors and all courtly pleasures,
To gain her love, became a shoemaker.
As for the honor which he lost in France,
Thus I redeem it: Lacy, kneel thee down!—
Arise, Sir Rowland Lacy! Tell me now,
Tell me in earnest, Oateley, canst thou chide,
Seeing thy Rose a lady and a bride?

L. Mayor. I am content with what your grace hath done.

Lincoln. And I, my liege, since there's no remedy.

King. Come on, then, all shake hands: I'll have you friends;
Where there is much love, all discord ends.
What says my mad lord mayor to all this love?

Eyre. O my liege, this honor you have done to my fine journeyman here, Rowland Lacy, and all these favors which you have shown to me this day in my poor house, will make Simon Eyre live longer by one dozen of warm summers more than he should.

King. Nay, my mad lord mayor, that shall be thy name,
If any grace of mine can length thy life,
One honor more I'll do thee: that new building,
Which at thy cost in Cornhill is erected,
Shall take a name from us; we'll have it called
The Leadenhall, because in digging it
You found the lead that covereth the same.

Eyre. I thank your majesty.

Wife. God bless your grace!

King. Lincoln, a word with you!

(*Enter* HODGE, FIRK, RALPH, *and more Shoemakers*)

Eyre. How now, my mad knaves? Peace, speak softly, yonder is the king.

King. With the old troop which there we keep in pay,
We will incorporate a new supply.
Before one summer more pass o'er my head,
France shall repent, England was injured.
What are all those?

Lacy. All shoemakers, my liege,
Sometime my fellows; in their companies
I lived as merry as an emperor.

King. My mad lord mayor, are all these shoemakers?

Eyre. All shoemakers, my liege; all gentlemen of the gentle craft, true Trojans, courageous cordwainers; they all kneel to the shrine of holy Saint Hugh.

All. God save your majesty.

Eyre. Mum, mad knaves! Not a word! I'll do't; I warrant you. They

are all beggars, my liege; all for themselves, and I for them all on both my knees do entreat, that for the honor of poor Simon Eyre and the good of his brethren, these mad knaves, your grace would vouchsafe some privilege to my new Leaden hall, that it may be lawful for us to buy and sell leather there two days a week.

King. Mad Sim, I grant your suit, you shall have patent
To hold two market-days in Leadenhall,
Mondays and Fridays, those shall be the times.
Will this content you?

All. Jesus bless your grace.

Eyre. In the name of these my poor brethren shoemakers, I most humbly thank your grace. But before I rise, seeing you are in the giving vein and we in the begging, grant Sim Eyre one boon more.

King. What is it, my lord mayor?

Eyre. Vouchsafe to taste of a poor banquet that stands sweetly waiting for your sweet presence.

King. I shall undo thee, Eyre, only with feasts;
Already have I been too troublesome;
Say, have I not?

Eyre. O my dear king, Sim Eyre was taken unawares upon a day of shroving, which I promised long ago to the prentices of London.
For, an't please your highness, in time past,
I bare the water-tankard, and my coat
Sits not a whit the worse upon my back;
And then, upon a morning, some mad boys,
It was Shrove Tuesday, even as 'tis now,
gave me my breakfast, and I swore then by the stopple of my tankard, if ever I came to be lord mayor of London, I would feast all the prentices. This day, my liege, I did it, and the slaves had an hundred tables five times covered; they are gone home and vanished;
Yet add more honour to the gentle trade,
Taste of Eyre's banquet, Simon's happy made.

King. Eyre, I will taste of thy banquet, and will say,
I have not met more pleasure on a day.
Friends of the gentle craft, thanks to you all,
Thanks, my kind lady mayoress, for our cheer.—
Come, lords, a while let's revel it at home!
When all our sports and banquetings are done,
Wars must right wrongs which Frenchmen have begun. (*Exeunt*)

ELIZABETHAN AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY LYRICS

Lyric poetry differs fundamentally from epic or narrative poetry in that it is concerned not with telling a story but with expressing the poet's personal feelings or his thoughts emotionally presented. The lyric is generally short, well unified, and direct; it should also have the quality of emotional intensity, whether it is a spontaneous outburst of a singer who holds nothing back, or the restrained but none the less genuine expression of a reflective poet whose emotion is "recollected in tranquillity."

The Age of Elizabeth was a time of enthusiasm and of dramatic achievement. The Revival of Learning and the Reformation had combined to give men new zest for life, and the drama and lyric poetry were natural outlets. Many of the early lyrics of the period are free, spontaneous utterances, full of the enthusiasm that requires expression in song. At the same time, much of the poetry was written by those associated with the court and its elaborate etiquette, who were strongly under the influence of conventions. The sonnet and the pastoral, for example, were written in imitation of foreign models and appropriated many highly conventionalized images. It is consequently difficult to be sure at times whether the poet is expressing his own feelings or writing according to the fashion. This uncertainty makes it impossible to assert positively that Shakespeare's sonnets have autobiographical value, but in any case they are beautiful in imagery, deep in thought, and rich in music. In general, enthusiasm for poetic expression characterizes the lyrics of the time, and there is no similar body of English poety that contains so much of the song quality.

As the century advanced, the reflective and philosophical element became stronger, as is evidenced by the poetry of John Donne and the religious lyrists whom he influenced. There is subtle thinking and less of the bright joyousness of the earlier period. In Ben Jonson and his followers, Herrick, Carew, Lovelace, and Suckling we find the qualities of finish, symmetry, and polish that resulted from the desire to say a thing as well as it could be said, — the manner of what is called Classicism. The best sonnets of Milton show clearly the effectiveness of this highly developed sense of form, combined with dignity of theme and glowing emotion.

SIR THOMAS WYATT (1503?–1542)

THE LOVER COMPARETH HIS STATE TO A SHIP IN PERILOUS STORM TOSSED ON THE SEA

My galley chargèd with forgetfulness
Thorough sharp seas, in winter nights doth pass,
'Tween rock and rock; and eke my foe, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelness,
And every hour, a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forcèd sighs, and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance,
Wreathèd with error, and with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain;
Drowned is reason that should be my comfort,
And I remain, despairing of the port.

A RENOUNCING OF LOVE

Farewell, Love, and all thy laws for ever!
Thy baited hooks shall tangle me no more:
Senec and Plato call me from thy lore
To perfect wealth my wit for to endeavor.
In blind error when I did persever,
Thy sharp repulse, that pricketh aye so sore,
Taught me in trifles that I set no store;
But 'scape forth thence, since liberty is lever.
Therefore, farewell! go trouble younger hearts,
And in me claim no more authority.
With idle youth go use thy property,
And thereon spend thy many brittle darts:
For hitherto though I have lost my time,
Me list no longer rotten boughs to climb.

HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY (1517?–1547)

COMPLAINT OF A LOVER REBUKED

Love, that liveth and reigneth in my thought,
That built his seat within my captive breast,
Clad in the arms wherein with me he fought,
Oft in my face he doth his banner rest.
She that me taught to love, and suffer pain
My doubtful hope and eke my hot desire
With shamefast cloak to shadow and refrain,
Her smiling grace converteth straight to ire.
The coward Love then to the heart apace
Taketh his flight, whereas he lurks and plains,
His purpose lost, and dare not show his face,
For my lord's guilt thus faultless bide I pains.
Yet from my lord shall not my foot remove;
Sweet is his death that takes his end by love.

VOW TO LOVE FAITHFULLY HOWSOEVER HE BE REWARDED

Set me whereas the sun doth parch the green,
Or where his beams do not dissolve the ice;
In temperate heat, where he is felt and seen;

In presence prest of people, mad or wise;
Set me in high, or yet in low degree;
In longest night, or in the longest day;
In clearest sky, or where clouds thickest be;
In lusty youth, or when my hairs are gray;
Set me in heaven, in earth, or else in hell;
In hill, or dale, or in the foaming flood;
Thrall, or at large, alive whereso I dwell;
Sick or in health, in evil fame or good;
Hers will I be, and only with this thought
Content myself, although my chance be naught.

GEORGE GASCOIGNE (1525?–1577)

A STRANGE PASSION OF A LOVER

Amid my bale [1] I bathe in bliss,
I swim in heaven, I sink in hell;
I find amends for every miss,
And yet my moan no tongue can tell.
I live and love, what would you more?
As never lover lived before.

I laugh sometimes with little lust,[2]
So jest I oft and feel no joy;
Mine ease is builded all on trust,
And yet mistrust breeds mine annoy.
I live and lack, I lack and have;
I have and miss the thing I crave.

These things seem strange, yet are they true;
Believe me, sweet, my state is such,
One pleasure which I would eschew,
Both slakes my grief and breeds my grutch.[3]
So doth one pain which I would shun
Renew my joys where grief begun.

Then like the lark that passed the night
In heavy sleep with cares opprest;
Yet when she spies the pleasant light,
She sends sweet notes from out her breast:
So sing I now because I think
How joys approach, when sorrows shrink.

And as fair Philomene again
Can watch and sing when others sleep,
And taketh pleasure in her pain,
To wray the woe that makes her weep:
So sing I now for to bewray: [4]
The loathsome life I lead alway.

To which to thee, dear wench, I write,
That know'st my mirth, but not my moan:
I pray God grant thee deep delight,
To live in joys when I am gone.
I cannot live; it will not be:
I die to think to part from thee.

JOHN LYLY (1554?–1606)

APELLES' SONG

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses,—Cupid paid;
He stakes his quiver, bow and arrows,
His mother's doves, and team of sparrows:
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
With these the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin:
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set [5] her both his eyes;
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O Love, has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?

[1] sorrow
[2] pleasure
[3] pain
[4] reveal
[5] staked

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY (1554–1586)

SONNETS

XXXI

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries!
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.[1]
Then, ev'n of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?—
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

XXXIX

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw:
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf of noise and blind of light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine in right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

[1] discloses

XLI

Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes
And of some sent from that sweet enemy, France;
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance;
Town folks my strength; a daintier judge applies
His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise;
Some lucky wits impute it but to chance;
Others, because of both sides I do take
My blood from them who did excel in this,
Think Nature me a man-at-arms did make.
How far they shot awry! The true cause is,
Stella looked on; and from her heavenly face
Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race.

LEAVE ME, O LOVE, WHICH REACHEST BUT TO DUST

Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust,
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things;

Grow rich in that which never taketh rust:
Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke where lasting freedoms be,
Which breaks the clouds and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
Oh, take fast hold! let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how evil becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world; thy uttermost I see:
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

DITTY: HEART EXCHANGE

My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for the other given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a bargain better driven.
My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides.
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides.
My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

THOMAS LODGE (1558?–1625)

ROSALIND'S MADRIGAL

Love in my bosom like a bee,
Doth suck his sweet;
Now with his wings he plays with me,
Now with his feet.
Within mine eyes he makes his nest,
His bed amidst my tender breast;
My kisses are his daily feast,
And yet he robs me of my rest.
Ah, wanton, will ye?

And if I sleep, then percheth he
With pretty flight,
And makes his pillow of my knee,
The livelong night.
Strike I my lute, he tunes the string;
He music plays if so I sing;
He lends me every lovely thing;
Yet cruel he my heart doth sting.
Whist,[1] wanton, still ye!

Else I with roses every day
Will whip you hence,
And bind you, when you long to play,
For your offence.
I'll shut my eyes to keep you in,
I'll make you fast it for your sin,
I'll count your power not worth a pin:
Alas! what hereby shall I win
If he gainsay me?

What if I beat the wanton boy
With many a rod?
He will repay me with annoy,
Because a god.
Then sit thou safely on my knee,
And let thy bower my bosom be;
Lurk in mine eyes, I like of thee.
O Cupid! so thou pity me,
Spare not, but play thee.

ROBERT GREENE (1560?–1592)

SOME SAY LOVE

Some say Love,
Foolish Love,
Doth rule and govern all the gods:

[1] hush

I say Love,
Inconstant Love,
  Sets men's senses far at odds.
Some swear Love,
Smooth-faced Love,
  Is sweetest sweet that men can have:
I say Love,
Sour Love,
  Makes virtue yield as beauty's slave.
A bitter sweet, a folly worst of all,
That forceth wisdom to be folly's thrall.

Love is sweet,
Wherein sweet?
  In fading pleasures that do pain.
Beauty sweet:
Is that sweet
  That yieldeth sorrow for a gain?
If Love's sweet,
Herein sweet,
  That minutes' joys are monthly woes:
'Tis not sweet,
That is sweet
  Nowhere but where repentance grows.
Then love who list, if beauty be so sour;
Labor for me, Love rest in prince's bower.

SEPHESTIA'S SONG TO HER CHILD

Weep not, my wanton,[1] smile upon my knee,
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
  Mother's wag, pretty boy,
  Father's sorrow, father's joy;
  When thy father first did see
  Such a boy by him and me,
  He was glad, I was woe;
  Fortune changed made him so,
  When he left his pretty boy,
  Last his sorrow, first his joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee,
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
  Streaming tears that never stint,[2]
  Like pearl-drops from a flint,
  Fell by course[3] from his eyes,
  That one another's place supplies;
  Thus he grieved in every part,
  Tears of blood fell from his heart,
  When he left his pretty boy,
  Father's sorrow, father's joy.

Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee,
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.
  The wanton smiled, father wept,
  Mother cried, baby leapt;
  More he crowed, more he cried,
  Nature could not sorrow hide:
  He must go, he must kiss
  Child and mother, baby bliss,
  For he left his pretty boy,
  Father's sorrow, father's joy.
Weep not, my wanton, smile upon my knee.
When thou art old there's grief enough for thee.

THE SHEPHERD'S WIFE'S SONG

Ah, what is love? It is a pretty thing,
As sweet unto a shepherd as a king;
  And sweeter too:
For kings have cares that wait upon a crown,
And cares can make the sweetest love to frown.
  Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

His flocks are folded, he comes home at night,
As merry as a king in his delight;
  And merrier too:

[1] playful one
[2] stop
[3] in a stream

For kings bethink them what the state require,
Where shepherds careless carol by the fire.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

He kisseth first, then sits as blithe to eat
His cream and curds as doth the king his meat;
And blither too:
For kings have often fears when they do sup,
Where shepherds dread no poison in their cup.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

To bed he goes, as wanton then, I ween,
As is a king in dalliance with a queen;
More wanton too:
For kings have many griefs affects to move,
Where shepherds have no greater grief than love.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

Upon his couch of straw he sleeps as sound,
As doth the king upon his beds of down;
More sounder too:
For cares cause kings full oft their sleep to spill,
Where weary shepherds lie and snort their fill.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

Thus with his wife he spends the year, as blithe
As doth the king at every tide or sithe;[1]
And blither too:
For kings have wars and broils to take in hand
When shepherds laugh and love upon the land.
Ah then, ah then,
If country loves such sweet desires do gain,
What lady would not love a shepherd swain?

CONTENT

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown;
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
The poor estate scorns Fortune's angry frown:
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbours quiet rest,
The cottage that affords no pride nor care,
The mean, that 'grees with country music best,
The sweet consort of mirth and modest fare.
Obscured life sets down a type of bliss:
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

[1] time

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564–1593)

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That valleys, groves, hills and fields,
Woods or steepy mountains yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
An if these pictures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

FRANCIS DAVISON (1575?–1619?)

MADRIGAL

TO CUPID

Love, if a god thou art,
Then evermore thou must
Be merciful and just.
If thou be just, O wherefore doth thy dart
Wound mine alone, and not my Lady's heart?
If merciful, then why
Am I to pain reserved,
Who have thee truly served;
While she, that by thy power sets not a fly,
Laughs thee to scorn and lives in liberty?

Then, if a god thou wouldst accounted be,
Heal me like her, or else wound her like me.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

SONGS FROM THE PLAYS

From Love's Labor's Lost

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
"Tu-whit, tu-whoo!" A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel [1] the pot.
When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw.
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs [2] hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
"Tu-whit, tu-whoo!" A merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

From Two Gentlemen of Verona

Who is Silvia? what is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

[1] stir [2] apples

Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair
To help him of his blindness,
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

From The Merchant of Venice

Tell me, where is fancy[1] bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot, how nourishèd?
Reply, reply.

It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies:
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it,—Ding-dong, bell.
Ding, dong, bell.

From As You Like It

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither! come hither! come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither! come hither! come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

---

[1] love

Blow, blow, thou winter wind!
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky!
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot;
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly.
Then heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

It was a lover and his lass
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
That o'er the green corn-field did pass
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing hey ding a ding:
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

Between the acres of the rye
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
These pretty country folks would lie:
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing hey ding a ding:
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
How that a life was but a flower
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing hey ding a ding:
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

And therefore take the present time
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
For love is crownéd with the prime
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing hey ding a ding:
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

From Much Ado About Nothing

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more!
Men were deceivers ever.
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never:
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny!

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe
Of dumps so dull and heavy!
The fraud of men were ever so,
Since summer first was leafy:
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny!

From Twelfth Night

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty:
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

From Measure for Measure

Take, O take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again;
Bring again;
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain!

From Cymbeline

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise!
Arise, arise!

SONNETS

XVIII

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimmed;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou growest:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XXIX

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

XXX

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense[1] of many a vanish'd sight:
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end.

XXXIII

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack[2] on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendor on my brow;
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region cloud hath masked him for me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain, when heaven's sun staineth.

LX

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;

[1] loss [2] flying clouds

Each changing place with that which goes
before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being
crowned,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift
confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on
youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's
brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to
mow:
And yet to times in hope my verse shall
stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel
hand.

LXXI

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am
fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms
to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you
so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be
forgot,
If thinking on me then should make you
woe.
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with
clay,
Do not so much as my poor name re-
hearse,
But let your love even with my life
decay,
Lest the wise world should look into your
moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

LXXIII

That time of year thou mayst in me be-
hold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do
hang
Upon those boughs which shake against
the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet
birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take
away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in
rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such
fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nour-
ished by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy
love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave
ere long.

CIV

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I
eyed,
Such seems your beauty still. Three win-
ters cold
Have from the forests shook three sum-
mers' price,
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn
turned
In process of the seasons have I seen,
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes
burned
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are
green.
Ah! yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure and no pace per-
ceived;

So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
Hath motion and mine eye may be deceived:
For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred:
Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

CVI

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rime
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have expressed
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they looked but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

CIX

O, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seemed my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:
That is my home of love: if I have ranged,
Like him that travels I return again,
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reigned
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stained,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

CXVI

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

CXXX

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red than her lips' red;
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound;
I grant I never saw a goddess go;

My mistress, when she walks, treads on
the ground:
And yet, by heaven, I think my love as
rare
As any she belied with false compare.

JOHN DONNE (1573–1631)

GO AND CATCH A FALLING STAR

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil's foot;
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
Things invisible go see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights
Till age snow white hairs on thee.
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
All strange wonders that befell thee,
And swear
Nowhere
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know;
Such a pilgrimage were sweet.
Yet do not; I would not go,
Though at next door we should meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

LOVE'S DEITY

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,
Who died before the god of love was
born.
I cannot think that he who then loved
most,
Sunk so low as to love one which did
scorn.
But since this god produced a destiny,
And that vice-nature, custom, lets it be,
I must love her that loves not me.

Sure they which made him god, meant
not so much,
Nor he in his young godhead practised it.
But when an even flame two hearts did
touch,
His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives; correspondency
Only his subject was; it cannot be
Love if I love who loves not me.

But every modern god will now extend
His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
All is the purlieu of the god of love.
O! were we wakened by this tyranny
To ungod this child again, it could not be
I should love her who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
As though I felt the worst that love
could do?
Love might make me leave loving, or
might try
A deeper plague, to make her love me
too;
Which, since she loves before, I am loth to
see.
Falsehood is worse than hate; and that
must be,
If she whom I love should love me.

DEATH

Death, be not proud, though some have
callèd thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;

For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy picture be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more: Death, thou shalt die!

BEN JONSON (1573–1637)

ECHO'S DIRGE FOR NARCISSUS

Slow, slow, fresh fount, keep time with my salt tears;
Yet slower, yet, O faintly, gentle springs;
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division when she sings.
Droop herbs and flowers,
Fall grief in showers,
Our beauties are not ours;
O, I could still,
Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is now a withered daffodil.

TO CELIA

Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee.

SIMPLEX MUNDITIIS

Still[1] to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found,
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all th' adulteries of art;
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

SONG

THAT WOMEN ARE BUT MEN'S SHADOWS.

Follow a shadow, it still flies you,
Seem to fly it, it will pursue;
So court a mistress, she denies you,
Let her alone, she will court you.
Say, are not women truly then
Styled but the shadows of us men?

At morn and even, shades are longest;
At noon, they are short or none;
Some men at weakest, they are strongest,
But grant us perfect, they're not known.
Say, are not women truly then
Styled but the shadows of us men?

[1] always

HYMN TO DIANA

Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright,

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wishèd sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright!

A NYMPH'S PASSION

I love and he loves me again,
Yet dare I not tell who;
For if the nymphs should know my swain,
I fear they'd love him too;
Yet if he be not known,
The pleasure is as good as none,
For that's a narrow joy is but our own.

I'll tell, that if they be not glad,
They may yet envy me;
But then if I grow jealous mad
And of them pitied be,
It were a plague 'bove scorn;
And yet it cannot be forborne
Unless my heart would, as my thought, be torn.

He is, if they can find him, fair
And fresh and fragrant too,
As summer's sky or purgèd air,
And looks as lilies do
That are this morning blown:
Yet, yet I doubt he is not known,
And fear much more that more of him be shown.

But he hath eyes so round and bright,
As make away my doubt,
Where Love may all his torches light,
Though Hate had put them out;
But then t' increase my fears
What nymph soe'er his voice but hears
Will be my rival, though she have but ears.

I'll tell no more, and yet I love,
And he loves me; yet no
One unbecoming thought doth move
From either heart I know;
But so exempt from blame
As it would be to each a fame,
If love or fear would let me tell his name.

JOHN FLETCHER (1579–1625)

MELANCHOLY

Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly:
There's naught in this life sweet
If man were wise to see't,
But only melancholy,
O sweetest melancholy!

Welcome folded arms and fixèd eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fast'ned to the ground,
A tongue chained up without a sound.

Fountain heads, and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves;
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls;
A midnight bell, a parting groan:
These are the sounds we feed upon.

Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley;
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

DRINK TO-DAY, AND DROWN ALL SORROW

Drink to-day, and drown all sorrow,
You shall perhaps not do it to-morrow:
Best, while you have it, use your breath;
There is no drinking after death.

Wine works the heart up, wakes the wit,
There is no cure 'gainst age but it:
It helps the head-ache, cough, and tisic,[1]
And is for all diseases physic.

Then let us swill, boys, for our health;
Who drinks well, loves the commonwealth.
And he that will to bed go sober
Falls with the leaf still in October.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563–1631)

SONNET LXI

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,
Nay I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.

Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes:
Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover.

[1] consumptive cough

WILLIAM DRUMMOND (1585–1649)

TO A NIGHTINGALE

Sweet bird! that sing'st away the early hours
Of winters past, or coming, void of care;
Well pleased with delights which present are,
Fair seasons, budding sprays, sweet-smelling flowers:
To rocks, to springs, to rills, from leafy bowers,
Thou thy Creator's goodness dost declare,
And what dear gifts on thee He did not spare,
A stain to human sense in sin that low'rs.
What soul can be so sick which by thy songs
(Attir'd in sweetness) sweetly is not driven
Quite to forget earth's turmoils, spites, and wrongs,
And lift a reverend eye and thought to heaven?
Sweet artless songster! thou my mind dost raise
To airs of spheres—yes, and to angels' lays.

THE BOOK OF THE WORLD

Of this fair volume which we World do name
If we the sheets and leaves could turn with care,
Of Him who it corrects, and did it frame,
We clear might read the art and wisdom rare:

Find out His power which wildest powers
doth tame,
His providence extending everywhere,
His justice which proud rebels doth not
spare,
In every page, no period of the same.
But silly we, like foolish children, rest
Well pleased with colored vellum, leaves
of gold,
Fair dangling ribbands, leaving what is
best,
On the great Writer's sense ne'er taking
hold;
Or if by chance we stay our minds on
aught,
It is some picture in the margin wrought.

MADRIGAL

LIFE, A BUBBLE

This Life, which seems so fair,
Is like a bubble blown up in the air
By sporting children's breath,
Who chase it everywhere
And strive who can most motion it be-
queath.
And though it sometimes seem of its own
might
Like to an eye of gold to be fix'd there,
And firm to hover in that empty height,
That only is because it is so light.
—But in that pomp it doth not long ap-
pear;
For when 'tis most admired, in a thought,
Because it erst was naught, it turns to
naught.

THOMAS CAMPION (?–1619)

THE CHALLENGE

Thou art not fair, for all thy red and
white,
For all those rosy ornaments in thee;
Thou art not sweet, though made of mere
delight,
Nor fair nor sweet, unless thou pity me.
I will not soothe thy fancies: thou shalt
prove
That beauty is no beauty without love.

Yet love not me, nor seek thou to allure
My thoughts with beauty, were it more
divine.
Thy smiles and kisses I cannot endure,
I'll not be wrapt up in those arms of
thine:
Now show it, if thou be a woman right,—
Embrace, and kiss, and love me, in de-
spite.

CHERRY RIPE

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow;
There cherries grow that none may buy,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rose-buds filled with
snow:
Yet them no peer nor prince may buy,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to come nigh
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

ADVICE TO A GIRL

Never love unless you can
Bear with all the faults of man!
Men sometimes will jealous be
Though but little cause they see,

And hang the head as discontent,
And speak what straight they will repent.

Men, that but one Saint adore,
Make a show of love to more;
Beauty must be scorn'd in none,
Though but truly served in one:
For what is courtship but disguise?
True hearts may have dissembling eyes.

Men, when their affairs require,
Must awhile themselves retire;
Sometimes hunt, and sometimes hawk,
And not ever sit and talk:—
If these and such-like you can bear,
Then like, and love, and never fear!

OF CORINNA'S SINGING

When to her lute Corinna sings,
Her voice revives the leaden strings,
And doth in highest notes appear
As any challenged echo clear:
But when she doth of mourning speak,
E'en with her sighs the strings do break.

And as her lute doth live or die,
Led by her passion, so must I:
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring;
But if she doth of sorrow speak,
E'en from my heart the strings do break.

GEORGE WITHER (1588–1667)

THE LOVER'S RESOLUTION

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day
Or the flow'ry meads in May—
If she think not well of me
What care I how fair she be?

Shall my seely heart be pined
'Cause I see a woman kind;
Or a well disposèd nature
Joinèd with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder than
Turtle-dove or pelican,
If she be not so to me
What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well deservings known
Make me quite forget mine own?
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may gain her name of Best;
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
She that bears a noble mind
If not outward helps she find,
Thinks what with them he would do,
That without them dares her woo;
And unless that mind I see,
What care I how great she be?

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair;
If she love me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and let her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be?

THOMAS CAREW (1595?–1639?)

RED AND WHITE ROSES

Read in these roses the sad story
Of my hard fate, and your own glory:
In the white you may discover
The paleness of a fainting lover;
In the red, the flames still feeding
On my heart, with fresh wounds bleeding.

The white will tell you how I languish,
And the red express my anguish;
The white my innocence displaying,
The red my martyrdom betraying.
The frowns that on your brow resided,
Have those roses thus divided.
Oh! let your smiles but clear the
weather,
And then they both shall grow together.

SONG

Would you know what's soft? I dare
Not bring you to the down, or air,
Nor to the stars to show what's bright,
Nor to snow to teach you white;

Nor, if you would music hear,
Call the orbs to take your ear;
Nor, to please your sense, bring forth
Bruised nard, or what's more worth.

Or on food were your thoughts plac't,
Bring you nectar for a taste:
Would you have all these in one,
Name my mistress, and 'tis done.

MEDIOCRITY IN LOVE REJECTED

Give me more love, or more disdain:
The torrid, or the frozen zone
Bring equal ease unto my pain;
The temperate affords me none:
Either extreme, of love or hate,
Is sweeter than a calm estate.

Give me a storm; if it be love,
Like Danaë in that golden shower
I swim in pleasure; if it prove
Disdain, that torrent will devour
My vulture-hopes; and he's possessed
Of heaven that's but from hell released.

Then crown my joys, or cure my pain;
Give me more love, or more disdain.

CELIA SINGING

You that think love can convey
No other way
But through the eyes into the heart
His fatal dart,
Close up those casements, and but hear
This siren sing;
And on the wing
Of her sweet voice it shall appear
That love can enter at the ear.

Then unveil your eyes, behold
The curious mould
Where that voice dwells; and as we know
When the cocks crow
We freely may
Gaze on the day;
So may you, when the music's done
Awake, and see the rising sun.

ASK ME NO MORE

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose;
For in your beauty's orient deep,
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For, in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale, when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters, and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more where those stars light,
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixed become, as in their sphere.

Ask me no more if east or west,
The phoenix builds her spicy nest;
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies.

TO MY INCONSTANT MISTRESS

When thou, poor excommunicate
From all the joys of love, shalt see
The full reward and glorious fate
Which my strong faith shall purchase me,
Then curse thine own inconstancy.

A fairer hand than thine shall cure
That heart, which thy false oaths did wound;
And to my soul, a soul more pure
Than thine, shall by Love's hand be bound,
And both with equal glory crowned.

Then shalt thou weep, entreat, complain
To Love, as I did once to thee;
When all thy tears shall be as vain
As mine were then; for thou shalt be
Damn'd for thy false apostacy.

PERSUASIONS TO JOY

If the quick spirits in your eye
Now languish, and anon must die;
If every sweet and every grace
Must fly from that forsaken face;
Then, Celia, let us reap our joys,
Ere time such goodly fruit destroys.

Or, if that golden fleece must grow
Forever free from aged snow;
If those bright suns must know no shade,
Nor your fresh beauties ever fade,
Then fear not, Celia, to bestow,
What still being gathered still must grow:
Thus, either Time his sickle brings
In vain, or else in vain his wings.

CELIA SINGING

Mark how my Celia, with the choice
Music of her hand and voice,
Stills the loud winds, and makes the wild
Incensed boar and panther mild!
Mark how those statues like men move,
Whilst men with wonder statues prove!
This stiff rock bends to worship her,
That idol turns idolater.
Now, see how all the new inspired
Images with love are fired!
Hark how the tender marble groans
And all the late transformed stones
Court the fair nymph with many a tear,
Which she (more stony than they were)
Beholds with unrelenting mind;
Whilst they, amazed to see combined
Such matchless beauty, with disdain,
Are all turned into stone again.

SIR JOHN SUCKLING
(1609–1642)

I PRITHEE SEND ME BACK MY HEART

I prithee send me back my heart,
Since I cannot have thine:
For if from yours you will not part,
Why then shouldst thou have mine?

Yet now I think on't, let it lie,
To find it were in vain,
For th' hast a thief in either eye
Would steal it back again.

Why should two hearts in one breast lie,
And yet not lodge together?
O love, where is thy sympathy,
If thus our breasts thou sever?

But love is such a mystery,
I cannot find it out:
For when I think I'm best resolv'd,
I then am in most doubt.

Then farewell care, and farewell woe!
I will no longer pine;
For I'll believe I have her heart,
As much as she hath mine.

WHY SO PALE AND WAN, FOND LOVER?

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do 't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame! this will not move:
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!

THE SIEGE

'Tis now since I sat down before
That foolish fort, a heart,
(Time strangely spent) a year and more,
And still I did my part:

Made my approaches, from her hand
Unto her lip did rise,
And did already understand
The language of her eyes.

Proceeded on with no less art,
(My tongue was engineer;)
I thought to undermine the heart
By whispering in the ear.

When this did nothing, I brought down,
Great cannon-oaths, and shot
A thousand thousand to the town,
And still it yielded not.

I then resolved to starve the place
By cutting off all kisses,
Praising and gazing on her face,
And all such little blisses.

To draw her out, and from her strength,
I drew all batteries in:
And brought myself to lie at length,
As if no siege had been.

When I had done what man could do,
And thought the place mine own,
The enemy lay quiet, too,
And smiled at all was done.

I sent to know from whence and where
These hopes and this relief.
A spy informed, Honour was there,
And did command in chief.

"March, march," quoth I, "the word straight give,
Let's lose no time, but leave her;
That giant upon air will live,
And hold it out for ever.

To such a place our camp remove,
As will no siege abide;
I hate a fool that starves her love,
Only to feed her pride."

RICHARD LOVELACE (1618–1658)

TO LUCASTA ON GOING TO THE WARS

Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new Mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such,
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not Honor more.

TO ALTHEA, FROM PRISON

When love with unconfinèd wings
  Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
  To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair,
  And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
  Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
  With no allaying Thames,
Our careless heads with roses bound,
  Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
  When healths and draughts go free,
Fishes that tipple in the deep
  Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I
  With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
  And glories of my king;
When I shall voice aloud how good
  He is, how great should be,
Enlargèd winds, that curl the flood,
  Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
  Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
  That for a hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love,
  And in my soul am free,
Angels alone that soar above
  Enjoy such liberty.

THE SCRUTINY

Why shouldst thou swear I am forsworn,
  Since thine I vowed to be?
Lady, it is already morn,
  And 'twas last night I swore to thee
  That fond impossibility.

Have I not loved thee much and long,
  A tedious twelve-hours' space?
I should all other beauties wrong,
  And rob thee of a new embrace,
  Should I still dote upon thy face.

Not but all joy in thy brown hair
  In others may be found;
But I must search the black and fair,
  Like skilful mineralists, that sound
  For treasure in unplowed-up ground.

Then if, when I have loved my round,
  Thou prov'st the pleasant she;
With spoil of meaner beauties crowned,
  I laden will return to thee,
  Ev'n sated with variety.

ROBERT HERRICK (1591–1674)

CORINNA'S GOING A-MAYING

Get up, get up for shame, the blooming
    morn
Upon her wings presents the god unshorn.
  See how Aurora throws her fair
  Fresh-quilted colours through the air!
  Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
  The dew bespangling herb and tree.
Each flower has wept, and bowed toward
    the east,
Above an hour since; yet you not drest,
  Nay! not so much as out of bed?
  When all the birds have matins said,
  And sung their thankful hymns; 'tis sin,
  Nay, profanation to keep in,
When as a thousand virgins on this day
Spring, sooner than the lark, to fetch in
    May.

Rise, and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the spring-time, fresh
    and green
  And sweet as Flora. Take no care
  For jewels for your gown or hair;

Fear not, the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you;
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept,
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept;
Come, and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night,
And Titan on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth. Wash, dress, be brief in praying:
Few beads are best, when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park
Made green, and trimmed with trees; see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch; each porch, each door, ere this
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of white-thorn neatly interwove,
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields, and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad, and let's obey
The proclamation made for May,
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day,
But is got up and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth, ere this, is come
Back, and with white-thorn laden home.
Some have dispatched their cakes and cream,
Before that we have left to dream;
And some have wept, and woo'd, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth.
Many a green-gown has been given;
Many a kiss, both odd and even;
Many a glance too has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the key's betraying
This night, and locks picked, yet w' are not a-Maying.

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time.
We shall grow old apace and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun,
And as a vapor, or a drop of rain,
Once lost can ne'er be found again;
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight,
Lies drown'd with us in endless night.
Then while time serves, and we are but decaying;
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

NIGHT PIECE, TO JULIA

Her eyes the glow-worm lend thee,
The shooting stars attend thee,
And the elves also,
Whose little eyes glow
Like the sparks of fire, befriend thee.

No will-o'-th' wisp mislight thee;
Nor snake or slow-worm bite thee;
But on, on thy way,
Not making a stay,
Since ghost there's none to affright thee.

Let not the dark thee cumber;
What though the moon does slumber?

The stars of the night
Will lend thee their light,
Like tapers clear without number.

Then Julia, let me woo thee,
Thus, thus to come unto me:
And when I shall meet
Thy silv'ry feet,
My soul I'll pour into thee.

TO ELECTRA

I dare not ask a kiss,
I dare not beg a smile,
Lest having that, or this,
I might grow proud the while.

No, no, the utmost share
Of my desire shall be
Only to kiss that air,
That lately kissèd thee.

TO THE VIRGINS, TO MAKE MUCH OF TIME

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles to-day,
To-morrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
The nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

TO PRIMROSES FILLED WITH MORNING DEW

Why do ye weep, sweet babes? Can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teemed her refreshing dew?
Alas, you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt the unkind
Breath of a blasting wind,
Nor are ye worn with years,
Or warped, as we,
Who think it strange to see
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
To speak by tears before ye have a tongue.

Speak, whimpering younglings, and make known
The reason why
Ye droop and weep.
Is it for want of sleep,
Or childish lullaby?
Or that ye have not seen as yet
The violet?
Or brought a kiss
From that sweetheart to this?
No, no, this sorrow shown
By your tears shed
Would have this lecture read:
That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought forth.

TO ANTHEA,

Who May Command Him Anything

Bid me to live, and I will live
Thy protestant to be;
Or bid me love, and I will give
A loving heart to thee.

A heart as soft, a heart as kind,
A heart as sound and free,
As in the whole world thou canst find,
That heart I'll give to thee.

Bid that heart stay, and it will stay,
To honor thy decree;
Or bid it languish quite away,
And 't shall do so for thee.

Bid me to weep, and I will weep,
While I have eyes to see;
And having none, yet I will keep
A heart to weep for thee.

Bid me despair, and I'll despair,
Under that cypress tree;
Or bid me die, and I will dare
E'en death, to die for thee.

Thou art my life, my love, my heart,
The very eyes of me,
And hast command of every part
To live and die for thee.

TO DAFFODILS

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the even-song;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay
As you, or anything.
We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

A THANKSGIVING TO GOD FOR HIS HOUSE

Lord, thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell,
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weatherproof,
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts, to watch and keep
Me while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come and freely get
Good words or meat.
Like as my parlor, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipped, unfled;
Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by thee;
The worts, the purslane, and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my beloved beet,
To be more sweet.
'Tis thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 'tis thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,

And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
  Twice ten for one;
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
  Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
  Me twins each year;
The while the conduits of my kine
  Run cream, for wine.
All these, and better thou dost send
  Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
  A thankful heart,
Which, fired with incense, I resign,
  As wholly thine;
But the acceptance,—that must be,
My Christ, by thee.

TO PERILLA

Ah, my Perilla! dost thou grieve to see
Me, day by day, to steal away from thee?
Age calls me hence, and my grey hairs bid come
And haste away to mine eternal home;
'T will not be long, Perilla, after this,
That I must give thee the supremest kiss.
Dead when I am, first cast in salt, and bring
Part of the cream from that religious spring,
With which, Perilla, wash my hands and feet;
That done, then wind me in that very sheet
Which wrapped thy smooth limbs when thou didst implore
The gods' protection but the night before;
Follow me weeping to my turf, and there
Let fall a primrose, and with it a tear:
Then lastly, let some weekly strewings be
Devoted to the memory of me;
Then shall my ghost not walk about, but keep
Still in the cool and silent shades of sleep.

HIS POETRY HIS PILLAR

Only a little more
  I have to write,
  Then I'll give o'er,
And bid the world good-night.

'Tis but a flying minute
  That I must stay,
  Or linger in it;
And then I must away.

O Time, that cut'st down all,
  And scarce leav'st here
  Memorial
Of any men that were!

How many lie forgot
  In vaults beneath,
  And piecemeal rot
Without a fame in death!

Behold this living stone
  I rear for me,
  Ne'er to be thrown
Down, envious Time, by thee.

Pillars let some set up,
  If so they please,
  Here is my hope,
And my pyramides.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593–1633)

LOVE

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
  Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack
  From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning,
  If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here:"
Love said, "You shall be he."
"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
I cannot look on thee!"
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord; but I have marred them: let my shame
Go where it doth deserve."
"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"
"My dear, then I will serve."
"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."
So I did sit and eat.

VIRTUE

Sweet day! so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dews shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring! full of sweet days and roses
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber never gives;
But, though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

EMPLOYMENT

If as a flower doth spread and die,
Thou wouldst extend me to some good,
Before I were by frost's extremity
Nipt in the bud:
The sweetness and the praise were thine;
But the extension and the room
Which in thy garland I should fill, were mine
At thy great doom.

For as thou dost impart thy grace
The greater shall our glory be.
The measure of our joys is in this place,
The stuff with thee.

Let me not languish then, and spend
A life as barren to thy praise
As is the dust, to which that life doth tend,
But with delays.

All things are busy; only I
Neither bring honey with the bees,
Nor flowers to make that, nor the husbandry
To water these.

I am no link of thy great chain,
But all my company is a weed.
Lord, place me in thy consort; give one strain
To my poor reed.

EASTER WINGS

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poor:

With thee
O let me rise,
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sin,
That I became
Most thin.

With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victory;
And if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

EDMUND WALLER (1606–1687)

GO, LOVELY ROSE

Go, lovely rose!
Tell her, that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to me.

Tell her, that's young
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That, hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired.

Then die; that she,
The common fate of all things rare,
May read in thee
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

TO THE NIGHTINGALE

O nightingale that on yon bloomy spray
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still:
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart dost fill,
While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love; O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why:
Whether the Muse, or Love, call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of heaven:
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; peace hath her victories
No less renowned than war: new foes arise,
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their marytred blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; [1] that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.[2]

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

HENRY VAUGHAN (1622–1695)

THE RETREAT

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy;
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,

[1] the Pope [2] Rome

Or taught my soul to fancy ought
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back—at that short space—
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense,
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.
O how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence the enlightened spirit sees
That shady city of palm trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

THE WORLD

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,
Driv'n by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
And all her train were hurled.
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
Wit's four delights,
With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,
Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower.

The darksome statesman, hung with weights and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog, moved there so slow
He did not stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts, like sad eclipses, scowl
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found,
Worked under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey; but one did see
That policy;
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
Were gnats and flies;
It rained about him blood and tears, but he
Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
And hugged each one his pelf;
The downright epicure placed heaven in sense,
And scorned pretence,
While others, slipt into a wide excess,
Said little less;
The weaker sort, slight, trivial wares enslave,
Who think them brave;

And poor, despisèd Truth sat counting by
Their victory.
Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
And sing and weep, soared up into the ring;
But most would use no wing.
O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
Before true light!
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
Because it shows the way,
The way, which from this dead and dark abode
Leads up to God;
A way where you might tread the sun and be
More bright than he!
But, as I did their madness so discuss,
One whispered thus
"This ring the Bridegroom did for none provide,
But for his bride."

PEACE

My soul, there is a country
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentry
All skilful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And one born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend,
And—O my soul, awake!—
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortress and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure,
But one who never changes,
Thy God, thy life, thy cure.

MATTHEW PRIOR (1664–1721)

AN ODE

The merchant, to secure his treasure,
Conveys it in a borrowed name:
Euphelia serves to grace my measure,
But Chloe is my real flame.

My softest verse, my darling lyre,
Upon Euphelia's toilet lay,
When Chloe noted her desire
That I should sing, that I should play.

My lyre I tune, my voice I raise;
But with my numbers mix my sighs;
And whilst I sing Euphelia's praise,
I fix my soul on Chloe's eyes.

Fair Chloe blushed, Euphelia frowned,
I sung and gazed, I played and trembled:
And Venus to the Loves around
Remarked how ill we all dissembled.

TO CHLOE WEEPING

See, whilst thou weep'st, fair Chloe, see
The world in sympathy with thee!
The cheerful birds no longer sing,
Each droops his head, and hangs his wing;
The clouds have bent their bosom lower,
And shed their sorrows in a shower;
The brooks beyond their limits flow,
And louder murmurs speak their woe.
The nymphs and swains adopt thy cares,
They heave thy sighs and weep thy tears.
Fantastic nymph, that grief should move
Thy heart obdurate against love!
Strange tears, whose power can soften all
But that dear breast on which they fall!

A SONG

If wine and music have the power
To ease the sickness of the soul,
Let Phœbus every string explore,
And Bacchus fill the sprightly bowl.

Let them their friendly aid employ
To make my Chloe's absence light,
And seek for pleasure to destroy
The sorrows of this live-long night.

But she to-morrow will return.
Venus, be thou to-morrow great,
Thy myrtles strew, thy odors burn,
And meet thy favorite nymph in state.
Kind goddess, to no other powers
Let us to-morrow's blessings own;
Thy darling loves shall guide the hours,
And all the day be thine alone.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

ALEXANDER'S FEAST,

or

THE POWER OF MUSIC.

An Ode in Honor of St. Cecilia's Day.

I

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft, in awful state,
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne.
His valiant peers were placed around;
Their brows with roses, and with myrtles bound:
(So should desert in arms be crowned.)
The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

CHORUS

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

II

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre:
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia pressed,
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then, round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound,
A present deity! they shout around;
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravished ears,
The monarch hears;
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

CHORUS

With ravished ears,
The monarch hears;
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

III

The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung;
Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face:
Now, give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.

Bacchus ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

CHORUS

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

IV

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain:
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.—
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful muse,
Soft pity to infuse,
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate,
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood:
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving, in his altered soul,
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

CHORUS

Revolving, in his altered soul,
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

V

The mighty master smiled, to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred-sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures:
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honor but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying:
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying;
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee—
The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause;
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair,
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

CHORUS

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair,
Who caused his care,

And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again;
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

VI

Now strike the golden lyre again;
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head;
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed, he stares around.
Revenge, revenge! Timotheus cries,
See the furies arise;
See the snakes, that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,
And, unburied, remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.—
The princes applaud, with a furious joy,
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

CHORUS

And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

VII

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down.

GRAND CHORUS

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down.

THE MORAL AND DIDACTIC ESSAY: BACON

One of the most distinguished and significant products of the English Renaissance in literature came at the height of the Age of Elizabeth in the Essays of Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans. Published in three series in 1597, 1612, and 1625, these essays represent the intellectual fruits of the revival of learning, as the emotional aspects of this stirring and adventurous time are shown in the wealth of lyric poetry and in the romantic quality of much of the drama.

The essay as a distinct type of literature had its origin in France in 1580 when Montaigne, the French statesman, published his *Essais,* but Bacon was the first to use the term in England. An essay was to him a consideration of the different aspects of a problem in an attempt to reach the truth, " certain brief notes, set down rather significantly than curiously," that the reader might " weigh and consider." His topics were broad ones, subjects that life itself forced upon the attention of every one, and upon them Bacon aimed to shed the light of practical wisdom. The essay in his hands may therefore be termed the didactic or moral essay, to distinguish it from the more informal, familiar essay that developed later.

These observations on life and human nature came from a wide experience as statesman, judge, and philosopher. While still a boy Bacon questioned the teachings of Aristotle and became interested in devising a new method of studying natural science. He later read for the law, studied diplomacy in France for several years, and sat in Parliament during the dramatic years in which alleged plots against the Queen led to trials and convictions. He sought office frequently, with the assistance of the impetuous Earl of Essex, but for a while without success. Under James I, however, Bacon received some grants of money, was made a peer of the realm, and filled the office of Lord Chancellor. Although a man of many virtues, he was tried and found guilty of corruption in office.

The essays reveal a cold, logical mind, dealing with things as they are rather than as they ought to be, often with shrewd worldly wisdom and self-interest. His style is terse and abrupt, but incisive. From these essays we can learn much of Bacon and the aristocracy for which he wrote, and not a little that is permanently valuable about life.

FRANCIS BACON, LORD VERULAM (1561–1626)

ESSAYS OR COUNSELS CIVIL AND MORAL

I

OF TRUTH

What is truth? said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer. Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief; affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind [1] be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor which men take in finding out of truth; nor again that when it is found it imposeth upon men's thoughts; that doth bring lies in favor; but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later schools of the Grecians examineth the matter and is at a stand to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage, as with the merchant; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell; this same truth is a naked and open day-light, that doth not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world, half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that showeth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that showeth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy *vinum dæmonum*,[2] because it filleth the imagination; and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and settleth in it, that doth the hurt; such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the love-making or wooing of it, the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it, and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath work ever since is the illumination of his Spirit. First he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet [3] that beautified the sect that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: *It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth* (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors and wanderings and mists and tempests in the vale below;* so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

[1] Skeptics

[2] devil's wine

[3] Lucretius

To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business; it will be acknowledged even by those that practise it not, that clear and round dealing is the honor of man's nature; and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it. For these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent; which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious. And therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace and such an odious charge. Saith he, *If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say, as that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men.* For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed, as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold that when Christ cometh, *he shall not find faith upon the earth.*

II

OF DEATH

Men fear death, as children fear to go in the dark; and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other. Certainly, the contemplation of death, as the wages of sin and passage to another world, is holy and religious; but the fear of it, as a tribute due unto nature, is weak. Yet in religious meditations there is sometimes mixture of vanity and of superstition. You shall read in some of the friars' books of mortification, that a man should think with himself what the pain is if he have but his finger's end pressed or tortured, and thereby imagine what the pains of death are, when the whole body is corrupted and dissolved; when many times death passeth with less pain than the torture of a limb; for the most vital parts are not the quickest of sense. And by him that spake only as a philosopher and natural man, it was well said, *Pompa mortis magis terret, quam mors ipsa.*[1] Groans and convulsions, and a discolored face, and friends weeping, and blacks, and obsequies, and the like, show death terrible. It is worthy the observing, that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak, but it mates and masters the fear of death; and therefore death is no such terrible enemy when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; love slights it; honor aspireth to it; grief flieth to it; fear pre-occupateth it; nay, we read, after Otho the emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) provoked many to die, out of mere compassion to their sovereign, and as the truest sort of followers. Nay, Seneca adds niceness and satiety: *Cogita quamdiu eadem feceris; mori velle, non tantum fortis, aut miser, sed etiam fastidiosus potest.*[2] A man would die, though he were neither valiant nor miserable, only upon a weariness to do the same thing so oft over and over. It is no less worthy to observe, how little alteration in good spirits the approaches of death make; for they appear to be the same men till the last instant. Augustus Cæsar died in a compliment; *Livia, conjugii nostri memor, vive et vale.*[3] Tiberius in dissimulation; as Tacitus saith of him, *Jam Tiberium vires et corpus, non dissimulatio, desere-*

[1] It is the things attendant upon death that are terrifying rather than death itself.

[2] Think how long thou hast done the same; not only a brave man or one who is miserable but even a fastidious man can wish to die.

[3] Farewell, Livia; live in remembrance of our married life.

bant.[1] Vespasian in a jest, sitting upon the stool; *Ut puto deus fio.*[2] Galba with a sentence; *Feri, si ex re sit populi Romani,*[3] holding forth his neck. Septimius Severus in despatch; *Adeste si quid mihi restat agendum.*[4] And the like. Certainly the Stoics bestowed too much cost upon death, and by their great preparations made it appear more fearful. Better saith he, *qui finem vitæ extremum inter munera ponat naturæ.*[5] It is as natural to die as to be born; and to a little infant, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit, is like one that is wounded in hot blood; who, for the time, scarce feels the hurt; and therefore a mind fixed and bent upon somewhat that is good doth avert the dolors of death. But, above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is, *Nunc dimittis,*[6] when a man hath obtained worthy ends and expectations. Death hath this also; that it openeth the gate to good fame, and extinguisheth envy. *Extinctus amabitur idem.*[7]

IV

OF REVENGE

Revenge is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith, *It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence.* That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labor in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honor or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then let a man take heed the revenge be such as there is no law to punish; else a man's enemy is still before hand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh. This is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent. But base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable; *You shall read* (saith he) *that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends.* But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: *Shall we* (saith he) *take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?* And so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Cæsar; for the death of Pertinax; for the death of Henry the Third of France; and many more. But in private revenges it is not so. Nay rather, vindictive persons live

[1] His bodily strength was leaving Tiberius, but not his power of dissimulation.
[2] I think that I am becoming a god.
[3] Strike, if it be for the advantage of Rome.
[4] Be at hand, if there remains anything for me to do.
[5] The man who considers the end of life as one of the benefits of nature.
[6] Now lettest thou depart.
[7] The same man shall be loved when he is dead.

the life of witches; who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.

V

OF ADVERSITY

It was an high speech of Seneca (after the manner of the Stoics), *that the good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished; but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired. Bona rerum secundarum optabilia; adversarum mirabilia.* Certainly if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other (much too high for a heathen), *It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God. Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.* This would have done better in poesy, where transcendences are more allowed. And the poets indeed have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery; nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian; that *Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus* (by whom human nature is represented), *sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher;* lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean. The virtue of prosperity is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New; which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground: judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

VII

OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN

The joys of parents are secret; and so are their griefs and fears. They cannot utter the one; nor they will not utter the other. Children sweeten labors; but they make misfortunes more bitter. They increase the cares of life; but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works are proper to men. And surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men; which have sought to express the images of their minds, where those of their bodies have failed. So the care of posterity is most in them that have no posterity. They that are the first raisers of their houses are most indulgent towards their children; beholding them as the continuance not only of their kind but of their work; and so both children and creatures.

The difference in affection of parents towards their several children is many times unequal; and sometimes unworthy; especially in the mother; as Solomon saith, *A wise son rejoiceth the father, but*

an ungracious son shames the mother. A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons; but in the midst some that are as it were forgotten, who many times nevertheless prove the best. The illiberality of parents in allowance towards their children is an harmful error; makes them base; acquaints them with shifts; makes them sort with mean company; and makes them surfeit more when they come to plenty. And therefore the proof is best, when men keep their authority towards their children, but not their purse. Men have a foolish manner (both parents and schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers during childhood, which many times sorteth to discord when they are men, and disturbeth families. The Italians make little difference between children and nephews or near kinsfolks; but so they be of the lump, they care not though they pass not through their own body. And, to say truth, in nature it is much a like matter; insomuch that we see a nephew sometimes resembleth an uncle or a kinsman more than his own parent; as the blood happens. Let parents choose betimes the vocations and courses they mean their children should take; for then they are most flexible; and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their children, as thinking they will take best to that which they have most mind to. It is true, that if the affection or aptness of the children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it; but generally the precept is good, *optimum elige, suave et facile illud faciet consuetudo.*[1] Younger brothers are commonly fortunate, but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

[1] Choose the best: habit will make it pleasant and easy.

VIII

OF MARRIAGE AND SINGLE LIFE

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences. Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk, *Such an one is a great rich man,* and another except to it, *Yea, but he hath a great charge of children;* as if it were an abatement to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a

wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives put men in mind of their wives and children, and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldiers more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, *vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati.*[1] Chaste women are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel to marry when he will. But yet he was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry,— *A young man not yet, an elder man not at all.* It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

X

OF LOVE

The stage is more beholding to love, than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief; sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury. You may observe that amongst all the great and worthy persons (whereof the memory remaineth, either ancient or recent) there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love: which shows that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion. You must except nevertheless Marcus Antonius, the half partner of the empire of Rome, and Appius Claudius, the decemvir and lawgiver; whereof the former was indeed a voluptuous man, and inordinate; but the latter was an austere and wise man: and therefore it seems (though rarely) that love can find entrance not only into an open heart, but also into a heart well fortified, if watch be not well kept. It is a poor saying of Epicurus, *Satis magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus,*[2] as if man, made for the contemplation of heaven and all noble objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol, and make himself a subject, though not of the mouth (as beasts are), yet of the eye; which was given him for higher purposes. It is a strange thing to note the excess of this passion, and how it braves the nature and value of things, by this; that the speaking in a perpetual hyperbole is comely in nothing but in love. Neither is it merely in the phrase; for whereas it hath been well said that the arch-flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, is a man's self; certainly the lover is more. For there was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover does of the person loved; and therefore it was well said, *That it is impossible to love and to be wise.* Neither doth this weakness appear to others only, and not to the party loved; but to the

[1] He preferred his old wife to immortality.

[2] We are each a large enough theater for the other.

loved most of all, except the love be reciproque.[1] For it is a true rule, that love is ever rewarded either with the reciproque or with an inward and secret contempt. By how much the more men ought to beware of this passion, which loseth not only other things, but itself! As for the other losses, the poet's relation doth well figure them: that he that preferred Helena quitted the gifts of Juno and Pallas. For whosoever esteemeth too much of amorous affection quitteth both riches and wisdom. This passion hath his floods in the very times of weakness; which are great prosperity and great adversity; though this latter hath been less observed: both which times kindle love, and make it more fervent, and therefore show it to be the child of folly. They do best, who if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter; and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it check once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men that they can no ways be true to their own ends. I know not how, but martial men are given to love: I think it is but as they are given to wine; for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures. There is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion towards love of others, which if it be not spent upon some one or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, and maketh men become humane and charitable; as it is seen sometime in friars. Nuptial love maketh mankind; friendly love perfecteth it; but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it.

XVIII

OF TRAVEL

Travel, in the younger sort, is a part of education, in the elder, a part of experience. He that travelleth into a country before he hath some entrance into the language, goeth to school, and not to travel. That young men travel under some tutor, or grave servant, I allow[2] well; so that he be such a one that hath the language, and hath been in the country before; whereby he may be able to tell them what things are worthy to be seen in the country where they go; what acquaintances they are to seek; what exercises or discipline the place yieldeth. For else young men shall go hooded, and look abroad little. It is a strange thing, that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land-travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation. Let diaries therefore be brought in use. The things to be seen and observed are: the courts of princes, specially when they give audience to ambassadors; the courts of justice, while they sit and hear causes; and so of consistories ecclesiastic; the churches and monasteries, with the monuments which are therein extant; the walls and fortifications of cities and towns, and so the havens and harbors; antiquities and ruins; libraries; colleges, disputations, and lectures, where any are; shipping and navies; houses and gardens of state and pleasure, near great cities; armories; arsenals; magazines; exchanges; burses; warehouses; exercises of horsemanship, fencing, training of soldiers, and the like; comedies, such whereunto the better sort of persons do resort; treasuries of jewels and robes; cabinets and rarities; and, to conclude, whatsoever is memorable in the places where they go. After all which the tutors or servants ought to make diligent inquiry. As for triumphs, masks, feasts, weddings, funerals, capital executions, and such

[1] mutual

[2] approve

shows, men need not to be put in mind of them; yet are they not to be neglected. If you will have a young man to put his travel into a little room, and in short time to gather much, this you must do. First, as was said, he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth. Then he must have such a servant or tutor as knoweth the country, as was likewise said. Let him carry with him also some card [1] or book describing the country where he travelleth; which will be a good key to his inquiry. Let him keep also a diary. Let him not stay long in one city or town; more or less as the place deserveth, but not long; nay, when he stayeth in one city or town, let him change his lodging from one end and part of the town to another; which is a great adamant [2] of acquaintance. Let him sequester himself from the company of his countrymen, and diet in such places where there is good company of the nation where he travelleth. Let him, upon his removes from one place to another, procure recommendation to some person of quality residing in the place whither he removeth; that he may use his favor in those things he desireth to see or know. Thus he may abridge his travel with much profit. As for the acquaintance which is to be sought in travel; that which is most of all profitable is acquaintance with the secretaries and employed men of ambassadors: for so in travelling in one country he shall suck the experience of many. Let him also see and visit eminent persons in all kinds, which are of great name abroad; that he may be able to tell how the life agreeth with the fame. For quarrels, they are with care and discretion to be avoided. They are commonly for mistresses, healths, place, and words. And let a man beware how he keepeth company with choleric and quarrelsome persons; for they will engage him into their own quarrels. When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries where he hath travelled altogether behind him; but maintain a correspondence by letters with those of his acquaintance which are of most worth. And let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse let him be rather advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts; but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country.

XXIII

OF WISDOM FOR A MAN'S SELF

An ant is a wise creature for itself, but it is a shrewd [3] thing in an orchard or garden. And certainly men that are great lovers of themselves waste the public. Divide with reason between self-love and society; and be so true to thyself, as thou be not false to others; specially to thy king and country. It is a poor centre of a man's actions, *himself*. It is right earth. For that only stands fast upon his own centre; whereas all things that have affinity with the heavens move upon the centre of another, which they benefit. The referring of all to a man's self is more tolerable in a sovereign prince; because themselves are not only themselves, but their good and evil is at the peril of the public fortune. But it is a desperate evil in a servant to a prince, or a citizen in a republic. For whatsoever affairs pass such a man's hands, he crooketh them to his own ends; which must needs be often eccentric to the ends of his master or state. Therefore let princes, or states, choose

[1] chart [2] lodestone [3] mischievous

such servants as have not this mark; except they mean their service should be made but the accessory. That which maketh the effect more pernicious is that all proportion is lost. It were disproportion enough for the servant's good to be preferred before the master's; but yet it is a greater extreme, when a little good of the servants shall carry things against a great good of the master's. And yet that is the case of bad officers, treasurers, ambassadors, generals, and other false and corrupt servants; which set a bias upon their bowl, of their own petty ends and envies, to the overthrow of their master's great and important affairs. And for the most part, the good such servants receive is after the model of their own fortune; but the hurt they sell for that good is after the model of their master's fortune. And certainly it is the nature of extreme self-lovers, as they will set an house on fire, and it were but to roast their eggs; and yet these men many times hold credit with their masters, because their study is but to please them and profit themselves; and for either respect they will abandon the good of their affairs.

Wisdom for a man's self is, in many branches thereof, a depraved thing. It is the wisdom of rats, that will be sure to leave a house somewhat before it fall. It is the wisdom of the fox, that thrusts out the badger, who digged and made room for him. It is the wisdom of crocodiles, that shed tears when they would devour. But that which is specially to be noted is, that those which (as Cicero says of Pompey) are *sui amantes, sine rivali*,[1] are many times unfortunate. And whereas they have all their times sacrificed to themselves, they become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconstancy of fortune, whose wings they thought by their self-wisdom to have pinioned.

[1] lovers of themselves, without a rival

XXVII

OF FRIENDSHIP

It had been hard for him that spake it to have put more truth and untruth together in few words, than in that speech, *Whosoever is delighted in solitude is either a wild beast or a god.* For it is most true that a natural and secret hatred and aversation towards society in any man, hath somewhat of the savage beast; but it is most untrue that it should have any character at all of the divine nature; except it proceed, not out of a pleasure in solitude, but out of a love and desire to sequester a man's self for a higher conversation: such as is found to have been falsely and feignedly in some of the heathen; as Epimenides the Candian, Numa the Roman, Empedocles the Sicilian, and Apollonius of Tyana; and truly and really in divers of the ancient hermits and holy fathers of the church. But little do men perceive what solitude is, and how far it extendeth. For a crowd is not company; and faces are but a gallery of pictures; and talk but a tinkling cymbal, where there is no love. The Latin adage meeteth with it a little: *Magna civitas, magna solitudo;*[2] because in a great town friends are scattered; so that there is not that fellowship, for the most part, which is in less neighborhoods. But we may go further, and affirm most truly that it is a mere and miserable solitude to want true friends; without which the world is but a wilderness; and even in this sense also of solitude, whosoever in the frame of his nature and affections is unfit for friendship, he taketh it of the beast, and not from humanity.

A principal fruit of friendship is the ease and discharge of the fulness and swellings of the heart, which passions of all kinds do cause and induce. We know

[2] The great town is a great solitude.

diseases of stoppings and suffocations are the most dangerous in the body; and it is not much otherwise in the mind; you may take sarza[1] to open the liver, steel to open the spleen, flower of sulphur for the lungs, castoreum for the brain; but no receipt openeth the heart, but a true friend; to whom you may impart griefs, joys, fears, hopes, suspicions, counsels, and whatsoever lieth upon the heart to oppress it, in a kind of civil shrift or confession.

It is a strange thing to observe how high a rate great kings and monarchs do set upon this fruit of friendship whereof we speak: so great, as they purchase it many times at the hazard of their own safety and greatness. For princes, in regard of the distance of their fortune from that of their subjects and servants, cannot gather this fruit, except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be as it were companions and almost equals to themselves, which many times sorteth to inconvenience. The modern languages give unto such persons the name of favorites, or privadoes;[2] as if it were matter of grace, or conversation. But the Roman name attaineth the true use and cause thereof, naming them *participes curarum;*[3] for it is that which tieth the knot. And we see plainly that this hath been done, not by weak and passionate princes only, but by the wisest and most politic that ever reigned; who have oftentimes joined to themselves some of their servants; whom both themselves have called friends, and allowed others likewise to call them in the same manner; using the word which is received between private men.

L. Sylla, when he commanded Rome, raised Pompey (after surnamed the Great) to that height, that Pompey vaunted himself for Sylla's over-match. For when he had carried the consulship for a friend of his, against the pursuit of Sylla, and that Sylla did a little resent thereat, and began to speak great, Pompey turned upon him again, and in effect bade him be quiet; *for that more men adored the sun rising than the sun setting.* With Julius Cæsar, Decimus Brutus had obtained that interest, as he set him down in his testament for heir in remainder after his nephew. And this was the man that had power with him to draw him forth to his death. For when Cæsar would have discharged the senate, in regard of some ill presages, and specially a dream of Calpurnia; this man lifted him gently by the arm out of his chair, telling him he hoped he would not dismiss the senate till his wife had dreamt a better dream. And it seemeth his favor was so great, as Antonius, in a letter which is recited *verbatim* in one of Cicero's Philippics, calleth him *venefica, witch;* as if he had enchanted Cæsar. Augustus raised Agrippa (though of mean birth) to that height, as when he consulted with Mæcenas about the marriage of his daughter Julia, Mæcenas took the liberty to tell him, *that he must either marry his daughter to Agrippa, or take away his life; there was no third way, he had made him so great.* With Tiberius Cæsar, Sejanus had ascended to that height, as they two were termed and reckoned as a pair of friends. Tiberius in a letter to him saith, *Hæc pro amicitiâ nostrâ non occultavi;*[4] and the whole senate dedicated an altar to Friendship, as to a goddess, in respect of the great dearness of friendship between them two. The like or more was between Septimius Severus and Plautianus. For he forced his eldest son to marry the daughter of Plautianus; and would often maintain Plautianus in doing affronts to

[1] sarsaparilla
[2] confidants
[3] sharers in responsibilities
[4] These things, out of consideration for our friendship, I have not concealed from you.

his son; and did write also in a letter to the senate, by these words: *I love the man so well, as I wish he may over-live me.* Now if these princes had been as a Trajan or a Marcus Aurelius, a man might have thought that this had proceeded of an abundant goodness of nature; but being men so wise, of such strength and severity of mind, and so extreme lovers of themselves, as all these were, it proveth most plainly that they found their own felicity (though as great as ever happened to mortal men) but as an half piece, except they mought have a friend to make it entire; and yet, which is more, they were princes that had wives, sons, nephews; and yet all these could not supply the comfort of friendship.

It is not to be forgotten what Comineus observeth of his first master, Duke Charles the Hardy; namely, that he would communicate his secrets with none; and least of all, those secrets which troubled him most. Whereupon he goeth on and saith that towards his latter time *that closeness did impair and a little perish his understanding.* Surely Comineus mought have made the same judgment also, if it had pleased him, of his second master, Lewis the Eleventh, whose closeness was indeed his tormentor. The parable of Pythagoras is dark, but true; *Cor ne edito: Eat not the heart.* Certainly, if a man would give it a hard phrase, those that want friends to open themselves unto are cannibals of their own hearts. But one thing is most admirable (wherewith I will conclude this first fruit of friendship), which is, that this communicating of a man's self to his friend works two contrary effects; for it redoubleth joys, and cutteth griefs in halves. For there is no man that imparteth his joys to his friend, but he joyeth the more; and no man that imparteth his griefs to his friend, but he grieveth the less. So that it is in truth of operation upon a man's mind, of like virtue as the alchemists use to attribute to their stone for man's body; that it worketh all contrary effects, but still to the good and benefit of nature. But yet without praying in aid of alchemists, there is a manifest image of this in the ordinary course of nature. For in bodies, union strengtheneth and cherisheth any natural action; and on the other side weakeneth and dulleth any violent impression; and even so it is of minds.

The second fruit of friendship is healthful and sovereign for the understanding, as the first is for the affections. For friendship maketh indeed a fair day in the affections, from storm and tempests; but it maketh daylight in the understanding, out of darkness and confusion of thoughts. Neither is this to be understood only of faithful counsel, which a man receiveth from his friend; but before you come to that, certain it is that whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understanding do clarify and break up, in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words: finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation. It was well said by Themistocles to the king of Persia, *That speech was like cloth of Arras, opened and put abroad; whereby the imagery doth appear in figure; whereas in thoughts they lie but as in packs.* Neither is this second fruit of friendship, in opening the understanding, restrained only to such friends as are able to give a man counsel; (they indeed are best;) but even without that, a man learneth of himself, and bringeth his own thoughts to light, and whetteth his wits as against a stone, which itself cuts not. In a word,

a man were better relate himself to a statue or picture, than to suffer his thoughts to pass in smother.

Add now, to make this second fruit of friendship complete, that other point which lieth more open and falleth within vulgar observation; which is faithful counsel from a friend. Heraclitus saith well in one of his enigmas, *Dry light is ever the best.* And certain it is, that the light that a man receiveth by counsel from another is drier and purer than that which cometh from his own understanding and judgment; which is ever infused and drenched in his affections and customs. So as there is as much difference between the counsel that a friend giveth, and that a man giveth himself, as there is between the counsel of a friend and of a flatterer. For there is no such flatterer as is a man's self; and there is no such remedy against flattery of a man's self as the liberty of a friend. Counsel is of two sorts: the one concerning manners, the other concerning business. For the first, the best preservative to keep the mind in health is the faithful admonition of a friend. The calling of a man's self to a strict account is a medicine, sometime, too piercing and corrosive. Reading good books of morality is a little flat and dead. Observing our faults in others is sometimes improper for our case. But the best receipt (best, I say, to work, and best to take) is the admonition of a friend. It is a strange thing to behold what gross errors and extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit, for want of a friend to tell them of them; to the great damage both of their fame and fortune: for, as St. James saith, they are as men *that look sometimes into a glass, and presently forget their own shape and favor.* As for business, a man may think, if he will, that two eyes see no more than one; or that a gamester seeth always more than a looker-on; or that a man in anger is as wise as he that hath said over the four and twenty letters; or that a musket may be shot off as well upon the arm as upon a rest; and such other fond and high imaginations, to think himself all in all. But when all is done, the help of good counsel is that which setteth business straight. And if any man think that he will take counsel, but it shall be by pieces; asking counsel in one business of one man, and in another business of another man; it is well (that is to say, better perhaps than if he asked none at all); but he runneth two dangers: one, that he shall not be faithfully counselled; for it is a rare thing, except it be from a perfect and entire friend, to have counsel given, but such as shall be bowed and crooked to some ends which he hath that giveth it. The other, that he shall have counsel given, hurtful and unsafe (though with good meaning), and mixed partly of mischief and partly of remedy; even as if you would call a physician that is thought good for the cure of the disease you complain of, but is unacquainted with your body; and therefore may put you in way for a present cure, but overthroweth your health in some other kind; and so cure the disease and kill the patient. But a friend that is wholly acquainted with a man's estate will beware, by furthering any present business, how he dasheth upon other inconvenience. And therefore rest not upon scattered counsels; they will rather distract and mislead, than settle and direct.

After these two noble fruits of friendship (peace in the affections, and support of the judgment), followeth the last fruit; which is like the pomegranate, full of many kernels; I mean aid and bearing a part in all actions and occasions. Here the best way to represent to life the manifold use of friendship is to cast and see how many things there are which a man

cannot do himself; and then it will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients, to say, *that a friend is another himself;* for that a friend is far more than himself. Men have their time, and die many times in desire of some things which they principally take to heart; the bestowing of a child, the finishing of a work, or the like. If a man have a true friend, he may rest almost secure that the care of those things will continue after him. So that a man hath, as it were, two lives in his desires. A man hath a body, and that body is confined to a place; but where friendship is, all offices of life are as it were granted to him and his deputy. For he may exercise them by his friend. How many things are there which a man cannot, with any face or comeliness, say or do himself? A man can scarce allege his own merits with modesty, much less extol them; a man cannot sometimes brook to supplicate or beg; and a number of the like. But all these things are graceful in a friend's mouth, which are blushing in a man's own. So again, a man's person hath many proper relations which he cannot put off. A man cannot speak to his son but as a father; to his wife but as a husband; to his enemy but upon terms: whereas a friend may speak as the case requires, and not as it sorteth with the person. But to enumerate these things were endless; I have given the rule, where a man cannot fitly play his own part; if he have not a friend, he may quit the stage.

XXVIII

OF EXPENSE

Riches are for spending, and spending for honor and good actions. Therefore extraordinary expense must be limited by the worth of the occasion; for voluntary undoing may be as well for a man's country as for the kingdom of heaven. But ordinary expense ought to be limited by a man's estate; and governed with such regard, as it be within his compass; and not subject to deceit and abuse of servants; and ordered to the best show, that the bills may be less than the estimation abroad. Certainly, if a man will keep but of even hand, his ordinary expenses ought to be but to the half of his receipts; and if he think to wax rich, but to the third part. It is no baseness for the greatest to descend and look into their own estate. Some forbear it, not upon negligence alone, but doubting to bring themselves into melancholy, in respect they shall find it broken. But wounds cannot be cured without searching. He that cannot look into his own estate at all, had need both choose well those whom he employeth, and change them often; for new are more timorous and less subtle. He that can look into his estate but seldom, it behooveth him to turn all to certainties. A man had need, if he be plentiful in some kind of expense, to be as saving again in some other. As if he be plentiful in diet, to be saving in apparel; if he be plentiful in the hall, to be saving in the stable; and the like. For he that is plentiful in expenses of all kinds will hardly be preserved from decay. In clearing of a man's estate, he may as well hurt himself in being too sudden, as in letting it run on too long. For hasty selling is commonly as disadvantageable as interest. Besides, he that clears at once will relapse; for finding himself out of straits, he will revert to his customs: but he that cleareth by degrees induceth a habit of frugality, and gaineth as well upon his mind as upon his estate. Certainly, who hath a state to repair, may not despise small things; and commonly it is less dishonorable to abridge petty

charges, than to stoop to petty gettings. A man ought warily to begin charges which once begun will continue; but in matters that return not he may be more magnificent.

XLII

OF YOUTH AND AGE

A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time. But that happeneth rarely. Generally, youth is like the first cogitations, not so wise as the second. For there is a youth in thoughts, as well as in ages. And yet the invention of young men is more lively than that of old; and imaginations stream into their minds better, and as it were more divinely. Natures that have much heat and great and violent desires and perturbations are not ripe for action till they have passed the meridian of their years; as it was with Julius Cæsar and Septimius Severus. Of the latter of whom it is said, *Juventutem egit erroribus, imo furoribus, plenam.*[1] And yet he was the ablest emperor, almost, of all the list. But reposed natures may do well in youth. As it is seen in Augustus Cæsar, Cosmus Duke of Florence, Gaston de Fois, and others. On the other side, heat and vivacity in age is an excellent composition for business. Young men are fitter to invent than to judge; fitter for execution than for counsel; and fitter for new projects than for settled business. For the experience of age, in things that fall within the compass of it, directeth them; but in new things, abuseth them. The errors of young men are the ruin of business; but the errors of aged men amount but to this, that more might have been done, or sooner. Young men, in the conduct and manage of actions, embrace more than they can hold; stir more than they can quiet; fly to the end, without consideration of the means and degrees; pursue some few principles which they have chanced upon absurdly; care not to innovate, which draws unknown inconveniences; use extreme remedies at first; and that which doubleth all errors will not acknowledge or retract them; like an unready horse, that will neither stop nor turn. Men of age object too much, consult too long, adventure too little, repent too soon, and seldom drive business home to the full period, but content themselves with a mediocrity of success. Certainly it is good to compound employments of both; for that will be good for the present, because the virtues of either age may correct the defects of both; and good for succession, that young men may be learners, while men in age are actors; and, lastly, good for extern accidents, because authority followeth old men, and favor and popularity youth. But for the moral part, perhaps youth will have the pre-eminence, as age hath for the politic. A certain rabbin, upon the text, *Your young men shall see visions, and your old men dream dreams,* inferreth that young men are admitted nearer to God than old, because vision is a clearer revelation than a dream. And certainly, the more a man drinketh of the world, the more it intoxicateth; and age doth profit rather in the powers of understanding, than in the virtues of the will and affections. There be some have an over-early ripeness in their years, which fadeth betimes. These are, first, such as have brittle wits, the edge whereof is soon turned; such as was Hermogenes the rhetorician, whose books are exceeding subtle; who afterwards waxed stupid. A second sort is of those that have some natural dispositions which have better grace in youth than in age; such as is a fluent and luxuriant speech; which be-

[1] His youth was full of errors, even of acts of madness.

comes youth well, but not age; so Tully saith of Hortensius, *Idem manebat, neque idem decebat.*[1] The third is of such as take too high a strain at the first, and are magnanimous more than tract of years can uphold. As was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy saith in effect, *Ultima primis cedebant.*[2]

XLIII

OF BEAUTY

Virtue is like a rich stone, best plain set; and surely virtue is best in a body that is comely, though not of delicate features; and that hath rather dignity of presence than beauty of aspect. Neither is it almost seen, that very beautiful persons are otherwise of great virtue; as if nature were rather busy not to err, than in labor to produce excellency. And therefore they prove accomplished, but not of great spirit; and study rather behavior than virtue. But this holds not always: for Augustus Cæsar, Titus Vespasianus, Philip le Bel of France, Edward the Fourth of England, Alcibiades of Athens, Ismael the Sophy of Persia, were all high and great spirits; and yet the most beautiful men of their times. In beauty, that of favor [3] is more than that of color; and that of decent and gracious motion more than that of favor. That is the best part of beauty, which a picture cannot express; no nor the first sight of the life. There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion. A man cannot tell whether Apelles or Albert Dürer were the more trifler; whereof the one would make a personage by geometrical proportions; the other, by taking the best parts out of divers faces, to make one excellent. Such personages, I think, would please nobody but the painter that made them. Not but I think a painter may make a better face than ever was; but he must do it by a kind of felicity (as a musician that maketh an excellent air in music), and not by rule. A man shall see faces, that if you examine them part by part, you shall find never a good; and yet altogether do well. If it be true that the principal part of beauty is in decent motion, certainly it is no marvel though persons in years seem many times more amiable; *pulchrorum autumnus pulcher;* [4] for no youth can be comely but by pardon, and considering the youth as to make up the comeliness. Beauty is as summer fruits, which are easy to corrupt, and cannot last; and for the most part it makes a dissolute youth, and an age a little out of countenance; but yet certainly again, if it light well, it maketh virtue shine, and vices blush.

[1] He remained the same, and it was not becoming.
[2] His last actions did not measure up to his first.
[3] physical loveliness

XLVII

OF NEGOTIATING

It is generally better to deal by speech than by letter; and by the mediation of a third than by a man's self. Letters are good, when a man would draw an answer by letter back again; or when it may serve for a man's justification afterwards to produce his own letter; or where it may be danger to be interrupted, or heard by pieces. To deal in person is good, when a man's face breedeth regard, as commonly with inferiors; or in tender cases, where a man's eye upon the countenance of him with whom he speaketh may give him a direction how far to go; and generally, where a man will reserve to himself liberty either to disavow or to expound. In choice of instruments, it

[4] those who are beautiful have a beautiful autumn

is better to choose men of a plainer sort, that are like to do that that is committed to them, and to report back again faithfully the success, than those that are cunning to contrive out of other men's business somewhat to grace themselves, and will help the matter in report for satisfaction's sake. Use also such persons as affect the business wherein they are employed; for that quickeneth much; and such as are fit for the matter; as bold men for expostulation, fair-spoken men for persuasion, crafty men for inquiry and observation, froward and absurd men for business that doth not well bear out itself. Use also such as have been lucky, and prevailed before in things wherein you have employed them; for that breeds confidence, and they will strive to maintain their prescription. It is better to sound a person with whom one deals afar off, than to fall upon the point at first; except you mean to surprise him by some short question. It is better dealing with men in appetite, than with those that are where they would be. If a man deal with another upon conditions, the start or first performance is all; which a man cannot reasonably demand, except either the nature of the thing be such, which must go before; or else a man can persuade the other party that he shall still need him in some other thing; or else that he be counted the honester man. All practice is to discover, or to work. Men discover themselves in trust, in passion, at unawares, and of necessity, when they would have somewhat done and cannot find an apt pretext. If you would work any man, you must either know his nature and fashions, and so lead him; or his ends, and so persuade him; or his weakness and disadvantages, and so awe him; or those that have interest in him, and so govern him. In dealing with cunning persons, we must ever consider their ends, to interpret their speeches; and it is good to say little to them, and that which they least look for. In all negotiations of difficulty, a man may not look to sow and reap at once; but must prepare business, and so ripen it by degrees.

L

OF STUDIES

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning, by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn[1] studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read

[1] despise

by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores.*[1] Nay, there is no stond or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins; [2] shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are *cymini sectores.*[3] If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

LVII

OF ANGER

To seek to extinguish anger utterly is but a bravery of the Stoics. We have better oracles: *Be angry, but sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your anger.* Anger must be limited and confined both in race and in time. We will first speak how the natural inclination and habit to be angry may be attempered and calmed. Secondly, how the particular motions of anger may be repressed, or at least refrained from doing mischief. Thirdly, how to raise anger or appease anger in another.

For the first; there is no other way but to meditate and ruminate well upon the effects of anger, how it troubles man's life. And the best time to do this is to look back upon anger when the fit is thoroughly over. Seneca saith well, *That anger is like ruin, which breaks itself upon that it falls.* The Scripture exhorteth us *to possess our souls in patience.* Whosoever is out of patience, is out of possession of his soul. Men must not turn bees;

. . . animasque in vulnere ponunt [4]

Anger is certainly a kind of baseness; as it appears well in the weakness of those subjects in whom it reigns; children, women, old folks, sick folks. Only men must beware that they carry their anger rather with scorn than with fear; so that they may seem rather to be above the injury than below it; which is a thing easily done, if a man will give law to himself in it.

For the second point; the causes and motives of anger are chiefly three. First, to be too sensible of hurt; for no man is angry that feels not himself hurt; and therefore tender and delicate persons must needs be oft angry; they have so many things to trouble them, which more robust natures have little sense of. The next is, the apprehension and construction of the injury offered to be, in the circumstances thereof, full of contempt: for contempt is that which putteth an edge upon anger, as much or more than

[1] studies pass into manners
[2] kidneys
[3] splitters of hairs
[4] and put their lives in the sting

the hurt itself. And therefore when men are ingenious in picking out circumstances of contempt, they do kindle their anger much. Lastly, opinion of the touch of a man's reputation doth multiply and sharpen anger. Wherein the remedy is, that a man should have, as Consalvo was wont to say, *telam honoris crassiorem*.[1] But in all refrainings of anger, it is the best remedy to win time; and to make a man's self believe, that the opportunity of his revenge is not yet come, but that he foresees a time for it; and so to still himself in the meantime, and reserve it.

To contain anger from mischief, though it take hold of a man, there be two things whereof you must have special caution. The one, of extreme bitterness of words, especially if they be aculeate [2] and proper; for *communia maledicta* [3] are nothing so much; and again, that in anger a man reveal no secrets; for that makes him not fit for society. The other, that you do not peremptorily break off, in any business, in a fit of anger; but howsoever you show bitterness, do not act anything that is not revocable.

For raising and appeasing anger in another; it is done chiefly by choosing of times, when men are frowardest and worst disposed, to incense them. Again, by gathering (as was touched before) all that you can find out to aggravate the contempt. And the two remedies are by the contraries. The former to take good times, when first to relate to a man an angry business; for the first impression is much; and the other is, to sever, as much as may be, the construction of the injury from the point of contempt; imputing it to misunderstanding, fear, passion, or what you will.

[1] honor of a weave heavier [2] stinging [3] common revilings

THE CLASSICAL EPIC: PARADISE LOST

To compare *Beowulf* with *Paradise Lost* is to recognize the need for a two-fold division of the epic: the race epic, or "epic of growth," and the "epic of art," the work of an individual poet. Both treat of big events in an exalted manner and both are concerned with characters or personages sufficiently imposing to stand out conspicuously. In the one case, however, we have an epic evolving itself slowly as it is passed around by oral tradition, the outcome of the story-telling habit in primitive society; in the other, a written epic carefully planned and executed by a poet who is consciously an artist in an enlightened age of reflection and culture. The *Iliad* and *Beowulf* represent the race epic; Virgil's *Æneid* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* are art forms, imitated from the older models.

John Milton was among the great English poets the one best fitted to compose an epic. As a young man he was earnest, serious minded, and strong willed, with a keen appreciation of artistic beauties and an imagination that soared into the realm of ideals. Leaving the University he continued to study eagerly and composed the so-called Minor Poems. In them he revealed the sensitiveness to tone and color, the mastery of form, and the depth of insight into life that are among his greatest gifts as a poet. When the Civil War drew him for a time from poetry into political life to aid the cause of Cromwell, he had the opportunity to know great men and to experience bitter conflicts and stirring scenes, the stuff of which epic poems are made.

With the Restoration (1660) Milton was forced to cease political activity and withdraw to the country. There, despite the handicap of blindness, he pressed on to carry out what had for years been his ambition, to "leave something so written to after times as they should not willingly let it die." Putting aside King Arthur as a subject, he chose a theme of universal interest, the Fall of Man, a theme that challenged his imagination and idealism. He wrote *Paradise Lost* (1667) "to justify the ways of God to man." It was a vast theme, conceived by a lofty imagination, and given eloquent expression by a poet who had a remarkable command of the varied music of English rhythms.

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

PARADISE LOST

THE VERSE

The Measure is English *Heroic Verse without Rime, as that of* Homer *in* Greek, *and of* Virgil *in* Latin; *Rime being no necessary Adjunct or true Ornament of Poem or good Verse, in longer Works especially, but the Invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame Meeter; grac't indeed since by the use of some famous modern Poets, carried away by Custom, but much to thir own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse than else they would have exprest them. Not without cause therefore some both* Italian *and* Spanish *Poets of prime note have rejected Rime both in longer and shorter Works, as have also long since our best* English *Tragedies, as a thing of it self, to all judicious eares, triveal and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt Numbers, fit quantity of Syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one Verse into another; not in the jingling sound of like endings, a fault avoyded by the learned Ancients both in Poetry and all good Oratory. This neglect then of Rime so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar Readers, that it rather is to be esteem'd an example set, the first in* English, *of ancient liberty recover'd to Heroic Poem from the troublesom and modern bondage of Rimeing.*

Book I.

THE ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK

The first Book proposes first in brief the whole Subject, *Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise wherein he was plac't:* Then touches *the prime cause of his fall, the Serpent, or rather* Satan *in the Serpent; who revolting from God, and drawing to his side many Legions of Angels, was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his Crew into the great Deep.* Which action past over, the Poem hasts into the midst of things, presenting *Satan with his Angels now fallen into Hell,* describ'd here *not in the Center* (for Heaven and Earth may be suppos'd as yet not made, certainly not yet accurst) *but in a place of utter darknesse, fitliest call'd* Chaos: *Here* Satan *with his Angels lying on the burning Lake, thunder-struck and astonisht, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion, calls up him who next in Order and Dignity lay by him; they confer of thir miserable fall.* Satan *awakens all his Legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded; They rise, thir Numbers, array of Battel, thir chief Leaders nam'd, according to the Idols known afterwards in* Canaan *and the Countries adjoyning. To these* Satan *directs his Speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven, but tells them lastly of a new World and new kind of Creature to be created, according to an ancient Prophesie or report in Heaven;* for that Angels were long before this visible Creation, was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. *To find out the truth of this Prophesie, and what to determin thereon, he refers to a full Councell. What his Associates thence attempt.* Pandemonium *the Palace of* Satan *rises, suddenly built out of the Deep: The infernal Peers there sit in Counsel.*

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,

Sing, Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount,[1] while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rime.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert[2] Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
Say first (for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell) say first what cause
Mov'd our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides.
Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?

Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stir'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The Mother of Mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equal'd the Most High,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Rais'd impious war in Heav'n and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquisht, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded though immortal. But his doom
Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay,
Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as Angels ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flam'd; yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes

[1] Mount Helicon, used as a symbol for Greek poetry.
[2] vindicate

That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsum'd.
Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd
For those rebellious; here their prison ordain'd
In utter darkness, and their portion set,
As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
As from the center thrice to th' utmost pole.
Oh how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelm'd
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns; and, weltring by his side,
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and nam'd
Beëlzebub. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heav'n call'd Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:
"If thou beest he—but Oh how fall'n! how chang'd
From him, who in the happy realms of light,
Cloth'd with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright! if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprize,
Join'd with me once, now misery hath join'd
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
From what height fall'n, so much the stronger prov'd
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though chang'd in outward lustre, that fixt mind,
And high disdain from sense of injur'd merit,
That with the Mightiest rais'd me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost: the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since by fate the strength of gods
And this empyreal substance cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanc't,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand foe,
Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heav'n."

So spake th' apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despair;
And him thus answer'd soon his bold compeer:
"O Prince, O Chief of many throned powers,
That led th' imbattled Seraphim [1] to war
Under thy conduct,[2] and, in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endanger'd Heav'n's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate!
Too well I see and rue the dire event
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and Heav'nly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigour soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state,
Here swallow'd up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conquerour (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice [3] his vengeful ire;
Or do him mightier service, as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be
Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep?
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminisht, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?"
Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend replied:
"Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destin'd aim.
But see! the angry Victor hath recall'd
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of Heav'n; the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge that from the precipice
Of Heav'n receiv'd us falling; and the thunder,
Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbor there;
And, re-assembling our afflicted Powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend

[1] The highest in rank among the angels. [2] command [3] satisfy

Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from hope
If not what resolution from despair."
Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blaz'd; his other parts besides,
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,
Briareos [1] or Typhon,[2] whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan,[3] which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.
Him, haply, slumb'ring on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-founder'd skiff
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind,
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wished morn delays.
So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chain'd on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had ris'n or heav'd his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enrag'd might see
How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shewn
On Man by him seduc't, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance pour'd.
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
Driv'n backward slope their pointing spires, and, roll'd
In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights—if it were land that ever burn'd
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appear'd in hue, as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus,[4] or the shatter'd side
Of thundering Ætna, whose combustible
And fewel'd entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublim'd [5] with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involv'd
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
Both glorying to have scap't the Stygian flood
As gods, and by thir own recover'd strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.
"Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost Archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for Heav'n? this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid

[1] a giant
[2] a Titan
[3] a sea monster
[4] a promontory in Sicily
[5] sublimated

What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equall'd, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
Infernal world! and thou, profoundest Hell,
Receive thy new possessor, one who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
Th' associates and co-partners of our loss,
Lie thus astonisht on th' oblivious pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regain'd in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"
So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
Thus answer'd: "Leader of those armies bright,
Which but th' Omnipotent none could have foil'd,
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers—heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it rag'd, in all assaults
Their surest signal—they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amaz'd—
No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious height!"
He scarce had ceast when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast. The broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist[1] views
At ev'ning from the top of Fesolè,[2]
Or in Valdarno,[3] to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral,[4] were but a wand—
He walkt with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marle,[5] not like those steps
On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
Nathless he so endur'd, till on the beach
Of that inflamed sea he stood, and call'd
His legions, Angel forms, who lay entranc't
Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks

[1] Galileo
[2] Fiesole, near Florence
[3] the valley of the Arno
[4] flagship
[5] soil

In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High over-archt imbow'r; or scatter'd sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion[1] arm'd
Hath vext the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris[2] and his Memphian[3] chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd
The sojourners of Goshen,[4] who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot-wheels: so thick bestrewn,
Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of thir hideous change.
He call'd so loud that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded: "Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the flow'r of Heaven, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits: or have ye chos'n this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of Heav'n?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
With scatter'd arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from Heav'n-gates discern
Th' advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n!"
They heard, and were abasht, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their General's voice they soon obey'd
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son,[5] in Egypt's evil day,
Wav'd round the coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping[6] on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darken'd all the land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hov'ring on wing under the cope of Hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, as a signal giv'n, th' uplifted spear
Of their great Sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:
A multitude, like which the populous North
Pour'd never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw,[7] when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Lybian sands.
Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,
The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
Their great Commander; godlike shapes, and forms

[1] A constellation thought to bring bad weather.
[2] Pharaoh
[3] Memphis was formerly the capital of Egypt.
[4] in Egypt
[5] Moses
[6] advancing with an undulating motion
[7] Danube

Excelling human, princely dignities,
And powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones;
Though of their names in Heav'nly records now
Be no memorial, blotted out and ras'd
By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names, till, wandring o'er the earth,
Through God's high sufferance for the trial of Man,
By falsities and lies the greatest part
Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and th' invisible
Glory of him that made them to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorn'd
With gay religions[1] full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities.
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the heathen world.
Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
Rous'd from the slumber on that fiery couch,
At their great Emperor's call, as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar, gods ador'd
Among the nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thundring out of Sion, thron'd
Between the Cherubim; yea, often plac'd
Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profan'd,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.
First, Moloch, horrid king, besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears,
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that past through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipt in Rabba[2] and her watry plain,
In Argob[3] and in Basan,[3] to the stream
Of utmost Arnon.[4] Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill,[5] and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet[6] thence
And black Gehenna[6] call'd, the type of Hell.
Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroar to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flow'ry dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Elealè to th' Asphaltick pool.[7]
Peor his other name, when he entic'd
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarg'd
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate;
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they who, from the bord'ring flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts

[1] religious ceremonies
[2] capital of Ammon
[3] districts near Palestine
[4] a river emptying into the Dead Sea
[5] the Mount of Olives
[6] Hell
[7] the Dead Sea

Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth[1]—those male,
These feminine. For spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure,
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condens't, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aerie purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfill.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their living strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bow'd down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth,[2] whom the Phœnicians called
Astarte, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on th' offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king[3] whose heart, though large,
Beguil'd by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day,
While smooth Adonis[4] from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, suppos'd with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eye survey'd the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopt off
In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,[5]
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his worshipers:
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him follow'd Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost and gain'd a king,
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offrings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquisht. After these appear'd
A crew who, under names of old renown,
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train,
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abus'd
Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek
Their wandring gods disguis'd in brutish forms

[1] gods of the Phœnicians
[2] goddess of Love
[3] Solomon
[4] a river in Phœnicia
[5] threshold

Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
Th' infection, when their borrow'd gold compos'd
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Lik'ning his Maker to the grazed ox—
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he pass'd
From Egypt marching, equal'd with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last, than whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
Or altar smok'd; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who fill'd
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage; and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown[1] with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when hospitable doors
Yielded their matrons to prevent worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might;
The rest were long to tell, though far renown'd,
Th' Ionian gods—of Javan's[2] issue held
Gods, yet confest later than Heav'n and Earth,
Their boasted parents: Titan, Heav'n's first-born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seiz'd
By younger Saturn; he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reign'd. These, first in Crete
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus rul'd the middle air,
Their highest Heav'n; or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria[3] to th' Hesperian[4] fields,
And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost isles.
All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appear'd
Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their Chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his count'nance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting,[5] with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently rais'd
Their fainted courage, and dispell'd their fears;
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be uprear'd
His mighty standard. That proud honour claim'd
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurl'd

[1] flushed [2] grandson of Noah [3] Adriatic [4] western [5] recovering

Th' imperial ensign, which, full high advanc't,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblaz'd,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host up-sent
A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving; with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appear'd, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders; [1] such as rais'd
To height of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breath'd, firm and unmov'd
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'suage,[2]
With solemn touches, troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force with fixed thought,
Mov'd on in silence to soft pipes that charm'd
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil, and now
Advanct in view they stand, a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old, with order'd spear and shield
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
Had to impose. He through the armed files
Darts his experienc't eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views—their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hard'ning in his strength
Glories; for never, since created man,
Met such embodied force as, nam'd with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warr'd on by cranes: though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra [3] with th' heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixt with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,[4]
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond;
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observ'd [5]
Their dread Commander. He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,

[1] flageolets
[2] assuage
[3] on the west coast of Italy
[4] King Arthur
[5] obeyed

Stood like a tow'r; his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than Archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
Of glory obscur'd: as when the sun new-ris'n
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all th' Archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrencht, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemn'd
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits for his fault amerc't [1]
Of Heav'n, and from eternal splendors flung
For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory wither'd; as, when Heaven's fire
Hath scath'd the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepar'd
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assay'd, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way:
"O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with th' Almighty!—and that strife
Was not inglorious, though th' event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have fear'd
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heav'n, shall fail to reascend,
Self-rais'd, and re-possess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of Heav'n,
If counsels different, or danger shun'd
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in Heav'n, till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength conceal'd,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
So as not either to provoke, or dread

[1] deprived

New war, provok't; our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heav'n that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom his choice regard
Should favor equal to the Sons of Heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption, thither or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial spirits in bondage, nor th' abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despair'd,
For who can think submission? War, then, war
Open or understood, must be resolv'd."
He spake; and, to confirm his words, out-flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumin'd Hell. Highly they rag'd
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clash'd on their sounding shields, the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heav'n.
There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belch'd fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf, undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, wing'd with speed,
A numerous brigade hasten'd: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe arm'd,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon [1] led them on,
Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From Heav'n, for ev'n in Heav'n his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heav'n's pavement, trodd'n gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoy'd
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransack'd the center, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Open'd into the hill a spacious wound,
And dig'd out ribs of gold. Let none admire [2]
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondring tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepar'd,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluic'd from the lake, a second multitude

[1] God of riches [2] wonder

With wondrous art founded [1] the massie ore,
Severing each kind, and scum'd the bullion-dross.
A third as soon had form'd within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance fill'd each hollow nook:
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy [2] sculptures grav'n;
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babilon,
Nor great Alcairo, such magnificence
Equal'd in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus [3] or Serapis [4] their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Ægypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile
Stood fixt her stately height, and strait the doors,
Op'ning their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the arched roof,
Pendant by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets,[5] fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring enter'd, and the work some praise,
And some the architect: his hand was known
In Heav'n by many a towered structure high,
Where scepter'd Angels held their residence,
And sat as princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unador'd
In ancient Greece; and in th' Ausonian land [6]
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
From Heav'n they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the chrystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
On Lemnos, th' Ægæan isle. Thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught avail'd him now
To have built in Heav'n high tow'rs; nor did he 'scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent
With his industrious crew to build in Hell.
Meanwhile the winged heralds, by command
Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium,[7] the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons call'd
From every band and squared regiment
By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended. All access was throng'd, the gates

[1] melted
[2] embossed
[3] an Assyrian god
[4] an Egyptian god
[5] iron vessels open at the top
[6] Italy
[7] "the hall of all the devils"

And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a cover'd field, where champions bold
Wont ride in arm'd, and at the Soldan's chair
Defi'd the best of Panim[1] chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance)
Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,
Brusht with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,[2]
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rub'd with balm, expatiate[3] and confer[4]
Their state-affairs. So thick the aerie crowd
Swarm'd and were straiten'd; till, the signal giv'n,
Behold a wonder! they but now who seem'd
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less then smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like that pigmean race
Beyond the Indian mount; or faerie elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
Wheels her pale course; they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.

[1] pagan
[2] From the middle of April until the middle of May.
[3] walk around
[4] talk over

Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduc'd their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,*
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent[5] and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

The End of the First Book.

Book II

THE ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK

The consultation begun, Satan *debates whether another Battel be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade: A third proposal is prefer'd, mention'd before by* Satan, *to search the truth of that Prophesie or Tradition in Heaven concerning another world and another kind of creature equal or not much inferior to themselves about this time to be created: Thir doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search:* Satan *thir chief undertakes alone the voyage, is honourd and applauded. The Councel thus ended, the rest betake them several wayes & to several imployments, as thir inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till* Satan *return. He passes on his Journey to Hell Gates, finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them, by whom at length they are op'nd and discover to him the great Gulf between Hell and Heaven; with what difficulty he passes through, directed by*

* crowded

Chaos, *the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.*

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus[1] and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Show'rs on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed;
"Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heav'n!
For since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppresst and fall'n,
I give not Heav'n for lost: from this descent
Celestial virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate.
Me though just right, and the fix'd laws of Heav'n,
Did first create your leader, next, free choice,
With what besides, in counsel or in fight,
Hath been achiev'd of merit, yet this loss,
Thus far at least recover'd hath much more
Establisht in a safe unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heav'n, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thund'rer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is then no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction; for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence, none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage then
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heav'n, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assur'd us; and by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate; who can advise may speak."
He ceas'd; and next him Moloc, scepter'd king,
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heav'n, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with th' Eternal to be deem'd
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Car'd not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
He reck'd not, and these words thereafter spake:
"My sentence[2] is for open war: of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now.

[1] Hormuz, an island in the Persian Gulf.

[2] opinion, judgment

For while they sit contriving, shall the rest,
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend, sit ling'ring here
Heav'n's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Arm'd with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
O'er Heav'n's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and for lightning see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? Th' ascent is easy then;
Th' event is fear'd: should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
To our destruction—if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroy'd! What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driv'n out from bliss, condemn'd
In this abhorred deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end,
The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance? More destroy'd than thus,
We should be quite abolisht, and expire.
What fear we then? What doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the height enrag'd,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential[1]—happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being!—
Or if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing;[2] and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb his Heav'n,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, his fatal throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."
He ended frowning, and his look denounc'd[3]
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On th' other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane;
A fairer person lost not Heav'n; he seem'd
For dignity compos'd and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low;
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds

[1] being
[2] as badly off as can be
[3] threatened

Timorous and slothful: yet he pleas'd the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began:
"I should be much for open war, O Peers,
As not behind in hate, if what was urg'd
Main reason to persuade immediate war
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution, as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of Heav'n are fill'd
With armed watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bord'ring deep
Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heav'n's purest light, yet our great enemy
All incorruptible would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and th' ethereal mould
Incapable of stain would soon expel
Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repuls'd, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
Th' almighty Victor to spend all his rage,
And that must end us, that must be our cure—
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated Night,
Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? How he can
Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
Belike through impotence, or unaware,
To give his enemies their wish, and end
Them in his anger, whom his anger saves
To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'
Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,
Reserv'd, and destin'd to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?' Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What when we fled amain, pursu'd and struck
With Heav'n's afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us: this Hell then seem'd
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chain'd on the burning lake? that sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
Awak'd, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames? or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were op'n'd, and this firmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrors, threat'ning hideous fall
One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery-tempest shall be hurl'd.

Each on his rock transfixt, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains;
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpiti'd, unrepreev'd,
Ages of hopeless end! This would be worse.
War therefore, open or conceal'd, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can[1] force or guile
With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heav'n's height
All these our motions vain sees and derides,
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we then live thus vile, the race of Heav'n
Thus trampled, thus expell'd to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust
That so ordains: this was at first resolv'd,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh, when those who at the spear are bold
And vent'rous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow—to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our supreme foe in time may such remit
His anger, and perhaps, thus far remov'd,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punisht; whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapor, or enur'd not feel,
Or chang'd at length, and to the place conform'd
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting, since our present lot appears
For happy[2] though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to ourselves more woe."
Thus Belial, with words cloth'd in reason's garb,
Counsel'd ignoble ease, and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:
"Either to disinthrone the King of Heav'n
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost: him to unthrone we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter; for what place can be for us
Within Heav'n's bound, unless Heav'n's Lord supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive

[1] can force accomplish

[2] as far as happiness is concerned

Strict laws impos'd, to celebrate his throne
With warbl'd hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forc't Halleluiahs; while he lordly sits
Our envied sov'reign, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In Heav'n, this our delight; how wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtain'd
Unacceptable, though in Heav'n, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous, when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labor and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heav'n's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, his glory unobscur'd,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
Must'ring their rage, and Heav'n resembles Hell!
As he our darkness, cannot we his light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil
Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heav'n shew more?
Our torments also may in length of time
Become our elements, these piercing fires,
As soft as now severe, our temper chang'd
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible[1] of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Or order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."
He scarce had finisht, when such murmur fill'd
Th' assembly, as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blust'ring winds, which all night long
Had rous'd the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'erwatcht, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: such applause was heard
As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleas'd,
Advising peace; for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell; so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy, and long process of time.
In emulation opposite to Heav'n.
Which when Beëlzebub perceiv'd, than whom,

[1] sense

Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd
A pillar of state; deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic though in ruin. Sage he stood,
With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:
"Thrones and imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,
Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style be call'd
Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
A growing empire—doubtless! while we dream,
And know not that the King of Heav'n hath doom'd
This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
From Heav'n's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far remov'd,
Under th' inevitable curb, reserv'd
His captive multitude. For he, be sure,
In height or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over Hell extend
His empire, and with iron scepter rule
Us here, as with his golden those in Heav'n.
What sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determin'd[1] us, and foil'd with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsaf't or sought; for what peace will be giv'n
To us enslav'd, but custody severe,
And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to[2] our power, hostility and hate,
Untam'd reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the conquerour least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heav'n, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprize? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in Heav'n
Err not), another world, the happy seat
Of some new race call'd Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favour'd more
Of him who rules above; so was his will
Pronounc'd among the gods, and by an oath,
That shook Heav'n's whole circumference, confirm'd.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mould,
Or substance, how endu'd, and what their power,
And where their weakness, how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though Heav'n be shut,
And Heav'n's high Arbitrator sit secure

[1] ended [2] to the extent of

In his own strength, this place may lie expos'd,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defence who hold it; here, perhaps,
Some advantageous act may be achiev'd
By sudden onset: either with Hell-fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny habitants; or if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise
In his disturbance; when his darling sons,
Hurl'd headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail originals, and faded bliss,
Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devis'd
By Satan, and in part propos'd; for whence,
But from the author of all ill, could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleas'd highly those infernal States, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes; with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:
"Well have ye judg'd, well ended long debate,
Synod of gods, and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolv'd; which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat; perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighboring arms
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter Heav'n; or else in some mild zone
Dwell not unvisited of Heav'n's fair light,
Secure, and at the bright'ning orient beam
Purge off this gloom; the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we send
In search of this new world? whom shall we find
Sufficient? who shall tempt with wand'ring feet
The dark, unbottom'd, infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth way, or spread his aerie flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict sentries and stations thick
Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection, and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for on whom we send
The weight of all, and our last hope, relies."
This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appear'd
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt; but all sat mute
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each

In other's count'nance read his own dismay,
Astonisht. None among the choice and prime
Of those Heav'n-warring champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till at last
Satan, whom now transcendent glory rais'd
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
Conscious of highest worth, unmov'd thus spake:
"O Progeny of Heav'n, empyreal Thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seiz'd us, though undismayed. Long is the way
And hard, that out of Hell leads up to light;
Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold, and gates of burning adamant,
Barr'd over us, prohibit all egress.
These pass'd, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential[1] Night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him, plung'd in that abortive gulf.
If thence he scape into whatever world,
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
And this imperial sov'reignty, adorn'd
With splendour, arm'd with power, if aught propos'd
And judg'd of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honour, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honour'd sits? Go therefore, mighty Powers,
Terror of Heav'n, though fall'n; intend at home,
While here shall be our home, what best may ease
The present misery, and render Hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion, intermit no watch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all: this enterprize
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent, lest, from his resolution rais'd,
Others among the chief might offer now
(Certain to be refus'd) what erst they fear'd,
And, so refus'd, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more th' adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose;
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone; and as a god
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heav'n.
Nor fail'd they to express how much they prais'd
That for the general safety he despis'd
His own; for neither do the Spirits damn'd
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast

[1] without essence or being

Their specious deeds on Earth, which glory excites
Or close ambition varnisht o'er with zeal.
Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief;
As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heav'n's cheerful face, the lowring element
Scowls o'er the darken'd landscape snow or shower;
If chance the radiant sun with farewell sweet
Extend his ev'ning beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! Devil with devil damn'd
Firm concord holds, men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heav'nly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the Earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait!
The Stygian counsel thus dissolv'd; and forth
In order came the grand infernal Peers;
Midst came their mighty Paramount, and seem'd
Alone th' antagonist of Heav'n, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme
And god-like imitated state; him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim inclos'd
With bright emblazonry, and horrent[1] arms.

Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great result;
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy[2]
By herald's voice explain'd; the hollow abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout return'd them loud acclaim.
Thence more at ease their minds and somewhat rais'd
By false presumptuous hope, the ranged powers
Disband; and, wandring, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplext, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at th' Olympian games or Pythian fields;
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal[3]
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form:
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Wag'd in the troubled sky, and armies rush
To battle in the clouds; before each van
Prick forth the aerie knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of Heav'n the welkin burns.

[1] bristling
[2] trumpet
[3] turning post

Others, with vast Typhœan[1] rage more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:
As when Alcides,[2] from Œchalia[3] crown'd
With conquest, felt th' envenom'd robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into th' Euboic sea. Others more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds and hapless fall
By doom of battle; and complain that fate
Free virtue should enthrall to force or chance.
Their song was partial, but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For eloquence the soul, song charms the sense)
Others apart sat on a hill retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate,
Fixt fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandring mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame,
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!
Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm th' obdured breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams:
Abhorred Styx, the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog[4]
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
Burns frore,[5] and cold performs th' effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed Furies hal'd,
At certain revolutions all the damn'd

[1] The reference is to Typhon, who was imprisoned under a volcano.
[2] Hercules
[3] a town in Thessaly
[4] a lake in Egypt
[5] frozen

Are brought: and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve [1] in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immovable, infixt, and frozen round
Periods of time; thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose th' attempt,
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus. Thus roving on
In confus'd march forlorn, th' adventrous bands,
With shudd'ring horror pale, and eyes aghast,
View'd first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They pass'd, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death,
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feign'd, or fear conceiv'd,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.
Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
Satan, with thoughts inflam'd of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight; sometimes
He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves with level wing the deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave tow'ring high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descri'd
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala,[2] or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,
Through the wide Ethiopian [3] to the Cape,[4]
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seem'd
Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impal'd with circling fire,
Yet unconsum'd. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable shape.
The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold
Voluminous and vast, a serpent arm'd
With mortal sting. About her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never ceasing bark'd
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,

[1] put out

[2] Bengal
[3] Indian Ocean
[4] Cape of Good Hope

If ought disturb'd their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet there still bark'd and howl'd
Within unseen. Far less abhorr'd than these
Vex'd Scylla,[1] bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lur'd with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland witches, while the laboring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other shape—
If shape it might be call'd that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd,
For each seem'd either—black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart; what seem'd his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast,
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
Th' undaunted Fiend what this might be admir'd,[2]
Admir'd, not fear'd—God and his Son except,
Created thing naught valu'd he nor shun'd—
And with disdainful look thus first began:
"Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,
That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
That be assur'd, without leave askt of thee.
Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with spirits of Heav'n."
To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:
"Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's sons,
Conjur'd against the Highest, for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemn'd
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heav'n,
Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy ling'ring, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."
So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform. On th' other side,
Incenst with indignation, Satan stood

[1] A monster who threw herself into the sea between Sicily and Italy.
[2] wondered

Unterrifi'd, and like a comet burn'd,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus huge
In th' arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Level'd his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at th' other, as when two black clouds,
With Heav'n's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
Hov'ring a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air:
So frown'd the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matcht they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
Had been achiev'd, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate, and kept the fatal key,
Ris'n, and with hideous outcry rush'd between.
"O father, what intends thy hand," she cried,
"Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head? and know'st for whom;
For him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordain'd his drudge, to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids—
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!"
She spake, and at her words the hellish pest
Forbore; then these to her Satan return'd:
"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee
What thing thou art, thus double-form'd, and why,
In this infernal vale, first met, thou call'st
Me father, and that fantasm call'st my son.
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee."
T' whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied:
"Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul? once deem'd so fair
In Heav'n, when at th' assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combin'd
In bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surpris'd thee; dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side op'ning wide,
Likest to thee in shape and count'nance bright,
Then shining Heav'nly-fair, a goddess arm'd,
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seiz'd
All th' host of Heav'n; back they recoil'd afraid
At first, and call'd me *Sin*, and for a sign
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
I pleas'd, and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
Becam'st enamor'd; and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret, that my womb conceiv'd
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,

And fields were fought in Heav'n; wherein remain'd
(For what could else?) to our almighty foe
Clear victory, to our part loss and rout
Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
Driv'n headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
Into this deep, and in the general fall
I also; at which time this powerful key
Into my hand was giv'n, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my op'ning. Pensive here I sat
Alone; but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transform'd; but he, my inbred enemy,
Forth issu'd, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sigh'd
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*
I fled; but he pursu'd (though more, it seems,
Inflam'd with lust than rage) and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismaid,
And, in embraces forcible and foule
Engendring with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceiv'd
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me; for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them, they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth
Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round.
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involv'd, and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be; so Fate pronounc'd.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though temper'd heav'nly; for that mortal dint,
Save he who reigns above, none can resist."
She finish'd; and the subtle fiend his lore
Soon learn'd, now milder, and thus answer'd smooth:
"Dear daughter—since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in Heav'n, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befall'n us unforeseen, unthought of—know,
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain

Both him and thee, and all the Heav'nly host
Of Spirits that, in our just pretences arm'd,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
Th' unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search with wandring quest a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round, a place of bliss
In the purlieus of Heav'n, and therein plac't
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more remov'd,
Lest Heaven, surcharg'd with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now design'd, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom [1] air, embalm'd
With odors: there ye shall be fed and fill'd
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."
He ceas'd, for both seem'd highly pleas'd, and Death
Grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blest his maw
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoic'd
His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:

"The key of this infernal pit, by due
And by command of Heav'n's all-powerful King,
I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatcht by living might.
But what owe I to his commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confin'd,
Inhabitant of Heav'n and Heav'nly-born,
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamors compasst round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high updrew,
Which but herself not all the Stygian powers
Could once have mov'd; then in the keyhole turns
Th' intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens: on a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,

[1] yielding

Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She open'd, but to shut
Excell'd her power; the gates wide op'n stood,
That with extended wings a banner'd host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;
So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep, a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; where length, breadth, and height
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms; they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-arm'd or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumber'd as the sands
Of Barca[1] or Cyrene's[1] torrid soil,
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere
He rules a moment; Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns; next him high arbiter,

[1] in Africa

Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confus'dly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless th' Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds—
Into this wild abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and look'd a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less peal'd
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona[2] storms,
With all her battering engines bent to raze
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of Heav'n were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans[3]
He spreads for flight, and in the surging smoke
Uplifted spurns the ground: thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity: all unawares,
Flutt'ring his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops
Ten thousand fathom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not by ill chance

[2] The goddess of war [3] wings among the Romans.

The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft; that fury stay'd—
Quencht in a boggy Syrtis, neither sea,
Nor good dry land—nigh founder'd, on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; behooves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryfon through the wilderness
With winged course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian,[1] who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloin'd
The guarded gold: so eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds and voices all confus'd,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bord'ring on light; when straight behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him enthron'd
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumor next and Chance,
And Tumult and Confusion all embroil'd,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

T' whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: "Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy,
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint
Wand'ring this darksome desert, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek,
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
Confine[2] with Heav'n; or if some other place,
From your dominion won, th' Ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound. Direct my course:
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expell'd, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be th' advantage all, mine the revenge!"

Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answer'd: "I know thee, stranger, who thou art,
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heav'n's King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,

[1] A one-eyed people of Scythia.

[2] touch

Confusion worse confounded; and Heav'n-gates
Pour'd out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend,
Encroacht on still through our intestine broils
Weak'ning the scepter of old Night: first Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heav'n and Earth, another world
Hung o'er my realm, link'd in a golden chain
To that side Heav'n from whence your legions fell.
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed!
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain."
He ceas'd; and Satan staid not to reply,
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renew'd
Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environ'd, wins his way; harder beset
And more endanger'd, than when Argo pass'd
Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks;
Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunn'd
Charybdis, and by th' other whirlpool steer'd:
So he with difficulty and labor hard
Mov'd on: with difficulty and labor he;
But, he once past, soon after, when man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,
Following his track (such was the will of Heav'n)
Pav'd after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endur'd a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continu'd, reaching th' utmost orb
Of this frail world; by which the Spirits perverse
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.
But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav'n
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din;
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off th' empyreal Heav'n, extended wide
In circuit, undetermin'd square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorn'd
Of living sapphire, once his native seat;
And fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendant world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accurst, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

The End of the Second Book.

TRAGEDY: ALL FOR LOVE

THE drama is generally a representation of conflict. The conflict may be between two individuals or two factions with opposing interests, ambitions, or desires. Again, it may be between an individual and fate, or between an individual and some established custom or moral law. And at times it may be a conflict within the individual, between duty and inclination, for example. When the hero or chief character in a play triumphs over the forces that are opposed to him, we have, technically, comedy; when he succumbs, we have tragedy.

All for Love (acted 1677) is Dryden's version of the story of Antony and Cleopatra. It is the tragedy of a man who cannot make the necessary decision between his clear duty and his infatuation for a woman. It treats, of course, the same theme as in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra,* but Dryden's play is much more than a mere revision of Shakespeare's. It is an independent handling of the story. The action is simplified, the number of characters greatly reduced, and the conception of the two main figures is quite different. Structurally *All for Love* is the better play, and in it the reader is more sympathetically disposed towards Cleopatra and her lover than in Shakespeare's version.

John Dryden (1631-1700) is the outstanding figure in English literature at the close of the seventeenth century. He was at the same time poet, dramatist, critic, satirist, and translator. His poetry is occasionally fine, and his critical essays are historically important; but he is best known as the author of several vigorous political satires in verse and numerous plays. The latter fall for the most part into two groups: Restoration comedies and 'heroic plays.' The former are comedies which reflect the spirit and the moral tone of the age which followed the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England. They treat questionable situations with a freedom that is the greater because it is a reaction from the restraint of the puritan régime. Ethically they are thoroughly unsound. The latter are plays of exaggerated character, sentiment, and action, generally written in the heroic couplet (see below, p. 362). *All for Love* belongs to neither of these groups, but is a return to an earlier and less artificial form of tragedy. In many ways it is Dryden's best claim to remembrance as a dramatist.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

ALL FOR LOVE; OR, THE WORLD WELL LOST

PROLOGUE

What flocks of critics hover here to-day,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcase of a play!
With croaking notes they bode some dire event,
And follow dying poets by the scent.
Ours gives himself for gone; y' have watched your time:
He fights this day unarmed, without his rhyme,
And brings a tale which often has been told,
As sad as Dido's and almost as old.
His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle,[1] and scarce rants at all:
He's somewhat lewd,[2] but a well-meaning mind;
Weeps much, fights little, but is wond'rous kind.
In short, a pattern, and companion fit,
For all the keeping Tonies[3] of the pit.
I could name more, a wife, and mistress too;
Both (to be plain) too good for most of you—
The wife well-natured, and the mistress true.
Now, poets, if your fame has been his care,
Allow him all the candor you can spare.
A brave man scorns to quarrel once a-day,
Like Hectors in at every petty fray.
Let those find fault whose wit's so very small,
They've need to show that they can think at all.

[1] grows dejected
[2] ignorant
[3] A slang word for foolish person.

Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls, must dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can,
As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.
Half-wits are fleas, so little and so light,
We scarce could know they live, but that they bite.
But, as the rich, when tired with daily feasts,
For change, become their next poor tenant's guests,
Drink hearty draughts of ale from plain brown bowls,
And snatch the homely rasher from the coals:
So you, retiring from much better cheer,
For once may venture to do penance here.
And since that plenteous autumn now is past,
Whose grapes and peaches have indulged your taste,
Take in good part, from our poor poet's board,
Such rivelled[4] fruits as winter can afford.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MARK ANTONY.
VENTIDIUS, *his General.*
DOLABELLA, *his Friend.*
ALEXAS, *the Queen's Eunuch.*
SERAPION, *Priest of Isis.*
MYRIS, *another Priest.*
Servants to Antony.

CLEOPATRA, *Queen of Egypt.*
OCTAVIA, *Antony's Wife.*
CHARMION, IRAS, } *Cleopatra's Maids.*
Antony's two little daughters.

SCENE: *Alexandria.*

[4] wrinkled

ACT I

Scene I. *The Temple of Isis*

(*Enter* Serapion, Myris, *Priests of Isis*)

Serap. Portents and prodigies are grown so frequent
That they have lost their name. Our fruitful Nile
Flow'd ere the wonted season, with a torrent
So unexpected, and so wondrous fierce,
That the wild deluge overtook the haste
Ev'n of the hinds that watch'd it: Men and beasts
Were borne above the tops of trees that grew
On th' utmost margin of the water-mark.
Then, with so swift an ebb the flood drove backward,
It slipt from underneath the scaly herd:
Here monstrous phocae[1] panted on the shore;
Forsaken dolphins there with their broad tails
Lay lashing the departing waves: hard by 'em,
Sea horses, floundering in the slimy mud,
Toss'd up their heads and dashed the ooze about 'em.

(*Enter* Alexas *behind them*)

Myr. Avert these omens, Heav'n!
Serap. Last night, between the hours of twelve and one,
In a lone aisle o' th' temple while I walk'd,
A whirlwind rose that, with a violent blast,
Shook all the dome: the doors around me clapt;
The iron wicket, that defends the vault,
Where the long race of Ptolemies is laid,
Burst open and disclos'd the mighty dead.
From out each monument, in order placed,
An armed ghost start up; the boy-king last
Rear'd his inglorious head. A peal of groans
Then follow'd, and a lamentable voice
Cried, Egypt is no more! My blood ran back,
My shaking knees against each other knock'd;
On the cold pavement down I fell entranc'd,
And so unfinish'd left the horrid scene.
Alex. (*Showing himself*) And dream'd you this? or did invent the story.
To frighten our Egyptian boys withal,
And train 'em up betimes in fear of priesthood?
Serap. My lord, I saw you not,
Nor meant my words should reach your ears; but what
I utter'd was most true.
Alex. A foolish dream,
Bred from the fumes of indigested feasts,
And holy luxury.
Serap. I know my duty:
This goes no farther.
Alex. 'Tis not fit it should;
Nor would the times now bear it, were it true.
All southern, from yon hills, the Roman camp
Hangs o'er us black and threatening, like a storm
Just breaking on our heads.
Serap. Our faint Egyptians pray for Antony;
But in their servile hearts they own Octavius.
Myr. Why then does Antony dream out his hours,
And tempts not fortune for a noble day,
Which might redeem what Actium lost?
Alex. He thinks 'tis past recovery.
Serap. Yet the foe
Seems not to press the siege.
Alex. Oh, there's the wonder.

[1] seals

Maecenas and Agrippa, who can[1] most
With Cæsar, are his foes. His wife Octavia,
Driv'n from his house, solicits her revenge;
And Dolabella, who was once his friend,
Upon some private grudge now seeks his ruin:
Yet still war seems on either side to sleep.

Serap. 'Tis strange that Antony, for some days past,
Has not beheld the face of Cleopatra;
But here, in Isis' temple, lives retir'd,
And makes his heart a prey to black despair.

Alex. 'Tis true; and we much fear he hopes by absence
To cure his mind of love.

Serap. If he be vanquish'd,
Or make his peace, Egypt is doom'd to be
A Roman province; and our plenteous harvests
Must then redeem the scarceness of their soil.
While Antony stood firm, our Alexandria
Rivall'd proud Rome (dominion's other seat),
And Fortune striding, like a vast Colossus,
Could fix an equal foot of empire here.

Alex. Had I my wish, these tyrants of all nature,
Who lord it o'er mankind, should perish, perish,
Each by the other's sword; but, since our will
Is lamely follow'd by our power, we must
Depend on one,—with him to rise or fall.

Serap. How stands the queen affected?

Alex. Oh, she dotes,
She dotes, Serapion, on this vanquish'd man,
And winds herself about his mighty ruins;
Whom would she yet forsake, yet yield him up,
This hunted prey, to his pursuer's hands,
She might preserve us all: but 'tis in vain.
This changes my designs, this blasts my counsels,
And makes me use all means to keep him here,
Whom I could wish divided from her arms
Far as the earth's deep centre. Well, you know
The state of things; no more of your ill omens
And black prognostics; labor to confirm
The people's hearts.

(*Enter* VENTIDIUS, *talking aside with a Gentleman of* ANTONY'S)

Serap. These Romans will o'erhear us.
But, who's that stranger? By his warlike port,
His fierce demeanor and erected look,
He's of no vulgar note.

Alex. Oh, 'tis Ventidius,
Our emp'ror's great lieutenant in the East,
Who first show'd Rome that Parthia could be conquer'd.
When Antony return'd from Syria last,
He left this man to guard the Roman frontiers.

Serap. You seem to know him well.

Alex. Too well. I saw him in Cilicia first,
When Cleopatra there met Antony:
A mortal foe he was to us, and Egypt.
But,—let me witness to the worth I hate,—
A braver Roman never drew a sword;
Firm to his prince, but as a friend, not slave.
He ne'er was of his pleasures; but presides
O'er all his cooler hours, and morning counsels:
In short the plainness, fierceness, rugged virtue
Of an old true-stampt Roman lives in him.
His coming bodes I know not what of ill
To our affairs. Withdraw, to mark him better,

[1] can accomplish

And I'll acquaint you why I sought you here,
And what's our present work.
(*They withdraw to a corner of the stage; and* VENTIDIUS, *with the other, comes forward to the front*)
Vent. Not see him, say you?
I say, I must, and will.
Gent. He has commanded,
On pain of death, none should approach his presence.
Vent. I bring him news will raise his drooping spirits,
Give him new life.
Gent. He sees not Cleopatra.
Vent. Would he had never seen her!
Gent. He eats not, drinks not, sleeps not, has no use
Of anything, but thought; or if he talks,
'Tis to himself, and then 'tis perfect raving:
Then he defies the world, and bids it pass;
Sometimes he gnaws his lip, and curses loud
The boy Octavius; then he draws his mouth
Into a scornful smile, and cries, "Take all,
The world's not worth my care."
Vent. Just, just his nature.
Virtue's his path; but sometimes 'tis too narrow
For his vast soul; and then he starts out wide,
And bounds into a vice that bears him far
From his first course, and plunges him in ills:
But, when his danger makes him find his fault,
Quick to observe, and full of sharp remorse,
He censures eagerly his own misdeeds,
Judging himself with malice to himself,
And not forgiving what as man he did,
Because his other parts are more than man.
He must not thus be lost.
(ALEXAS *and the Priests come forward*)
Alex. You have your full instructions, now advance;
Proclaim your orders loudly.
Serap. Romans, Egyptians, hear the queen's command.
Thus Cleopatra bids: Let labor cease;
To pomp and triumphs give this happy day,
That gave the world a lord: 'tis Antony's.
Live, Antony; and Cleopatra live!
Be this the general voice sent up to Heav'n,
And every public place repeat this echo.
Vent. (*Aside*) Fine pageantry!
Serap. Set out before your doors
The images of all your sleeping fathers,
With laurels crown'd; with laurels wreathe your posts,
And strew with flow'rs the pavement; let the priests
Do present[1] sacrifice; pour out the wine,
And call the gods to join with you in gladness.
Vent. Curse on the tongue that bids this general joy!
Can they be friends of Antony, who revel
When Antony's in danger? Hide, for shame,
You Romans, your great grandsires' images,
For fear their souls should animate their marbles,
To blush at their degenerate progeny.
Alex. A love which knows no bounds to Antony
Would mark the day with honors, when all Heaven
Labor'd for him, when each propitious star
Stood wakeful in his orb, to watch that hour,
And shed his better influence. Her own birthday
Our queen neglected like a vulgar fate,
That pass'd obscurely by.
Vent. Would it had slept,

[1] immediate

Divided far from his; till some remote
And future age had call'd it out, to ruin
Some other prince, not him!
Alex. Your emperor,
Though grown unkind, would be more gentle than
To upbraid my queen for loving him too well.
Vent. Does the mute sacrifice upbraid the priest?
He knows him not his executioner.
Oh, she has deck'd his ruin with her love,
Led him in golden bands to gaudy slaughter,
And made perdition pleasing: she has left him
The blank of what he was.
I tell thee, eunuch, she has quite unmann'd him.
Can any Roman see, and know him now,
Thus alter'd from the lord of half mankind,
Unbent, unsinew'd, made a woman's toy,
Shrunk from the vast extent of all his honors,
And crampt within a corner of the world?
O Antony!
Thou bravest soldier, and thou best of friends!
Bounteous as nature; next to nature's God!
Could'st thou but make new worlds, so would'st thou give 'em
As bounty, were thy being rough in battle
As the first Romans when they went to war;
Yet, after victory, more pitiful
Than all their praying virgins left at home!
Alex. Would you could add, to those more shining virtues,
His truth to her who loves him.
Vent. Would I could not!
But wherefore waste I precious hours with thee!
Thou art her darling mischief, her chief engine,
Antony's other fate. Go, tell thy queen,
Ventidius is arriv'd, to end her charms.
Let your Egyptian timbrels play alone,
Nor mix effeminate sounds with Roman trumpets.
You dare not fight for Antony; go pray
And keep your cowards' holiday in temples. (*Exeunt* ALEXAS, SERAPION)

(*Re-enter the Gentlemen of* M. ANTONY)

2 *Gent.* The emperor approaches, and commands,
On pain of death, that none presume to stay.
1 *Gent.* I dare not disobey him.
(*Going out with the other*)
Vent. Well, I dare.
But I'll observe him first unseen, and find
Which way his humor drives: the rest I'll venture. (*Withdraws*)

(*Enter* ANTONY, *walking with a disturb'd motion before he speaks*)

Ant. They tell me 'tis my birthday, and I'll keep it
With double pomp of sadness.
'Tis what the day deserves, which gave me breath.
Why was I rais'd the meteor of the world,
Hung in the skies, and blazing as I travel'd,
Till all my fires were spent; and then cast downward,
To be trod out by Cæsar?
Vent. (*Aside*) - On my soul,
'Tis mournful, wondrous mournful!
Ant. Count thy gains.
Now, Antony, wouldst thou be born for this?
Glutton of fortune, thy devouring youth
Has starv'd thy wanting age.
Vent. (*Aside*) How sorrow shakes him!
So, now the tempest tears him up by th' roots,
And on the ground extends the noble ruin.
(ANTONY *having thrown himself down*)

Lie there, thou shadow of an emperor;
The place thou pressest on thy mother earth
Is all thy empire now: now it contains thee;
Some few days hence, and then 'twill be too large,
When thou'rt contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold ashes; then Octavia
(For Cleopatra will not live to see it),
Octavia then will have thee all her own,
And bear thee in her widow'd hand to Cæsar;
Cæsar will weep, the crocodile will weep,
To see his rival of the universe
Lie still and peaceful there. I'll think no more on't.

Ant. Give me some music: look that it be sad;
I'll soothe my melancholy till I swell
And burst myself with sighing.—
(*Soft music*)
'Tis somewhat to my humor: stay, I fancy
I'm now turn'd wild, a commoner of nature;
Of all forsaken, and forsaking all;
Live in a shady forest's sylvan scene;
Stretch'd at my length beneath some blasted oak,
I lean my head upon the mossy bark,
And look, just of a piece, as I grew from it;
My uncomb'd locks, matted like mistletoe,
Hang o'er my hoary face; a murm'ring brook
Runs at my foot.

Vent. Methinks I fancy
Myself there too.

Ant. The herd come jumping by me,
And, fearless, quench their thirst while I look on,
And take me for their fellow-citizen.
More of this image, more; it lulls my thoughts.
(*Soft music again*)

Vent. I must disturb him; I can hold no longer.
(*Stands before him*)

Ant. (*Starting up*) Art thou Ventidius?

Vent. Are you Antony?
I'm liker what I was, than you to him
I left you last.

Ant. I'm angry.

Vent. So am I.

Ant. I would be private: leave me.

Vent. Sir, I love you,
And therefore will not leave you.

Ant. Will not leave me!
Where have you learnt that answer? Who am I?

Vent. My emperor; the man I love next Heaven:
If I said more, I think 'twere scarce a sin
Y'are all that's good, and god-like.

Ant. All that's wretched.
You will not leave me then?

Vent. 'Twas too presuming
To say I would not; but I dare not leave you:
And, 'tis unkind in you to chide me hence
So soon, when I so far have come to see you.

Ant. Now thou has seen me, art thou satisfied?
For, if a friend, thou hast beheld enough;
And, if a foe, too much.

Vent. (*Weeping*) Look, emperor, this is no common dew.
I have not wept this forty year; but now
My mother comes afresh into my eyes;
I cannot help her softness.

Ant. By Heav'n, he weeps! poor good old man, he weeps!
The big round drops course one another down
The furrows of his cheeks. Stop 'em, Ventidius,
Or I shall blush to death: they set my shame,
That caus'd 'em, full before me.

Vent. I'll do my best.

Ant. Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends:
See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not
For my own griefs, but thine.—Nay, father!
Vent. Emperor.
Ant. Emperor! Why, that's the style of victory;
The conqu'ring soldier, red with unfelt wounds,
Salutes his general so: but never more
Shall that sound reach my ears.
Vent. I warrant you.
Ant. Actium, Actium! Oh!—
Vent. It sits too near you.
Ant. Here, here it lies; a lump of lead by day,
And in my short, distracted, nightly slumbers,
The hag that rides my dreams—
Vent. Out with it; give it vent.
Ant. Urge not my shame.
I lost a battle.
Vent. So has Julius done.
Ant. Thou favor'st me, and speak'st not half thou think'st;
For Julius fought it out, and lost it fairly:
But Antony—
Vent. Nay, stop not.
Ant. Antony,—
Well, thou wilt have it,—like a coward, fled,
Fled while his soldiers fought; fled first, Ventidius.
Thou long'st to curse me, and I give thee leave.
I know thou cam'st prepar'd to rail.
Vent. I did.
Ant. I'll help thee.—I have been a man, Ventidius.
Vent. Yes, and a brave one; but—
Ant. I know thy meaning.
But I have lost my reason, have disgrac'd
The name of soldier with inglorious ease.
In the full vintage of my flowing honors,
Sat still, and saw it prest by other hands.
Fortune came smiling to my youth, and woo'd it,
And purple greatness met my ripen'd years.
When first I came to empire, I was borne
On tides of people, crowding to my triumphs,
The wish of nations; and the willing world
Receiv'd me as its pledge of future peace;
I was so great, so happy, so belov'd,
Fate could not ruin me; till I took pains,
And work'd against my fortune, chid her from me,
And turn'd her loose; yet still she came again.
My careless days, and my luxurious nights,
At length have wearied her, and now she's gone,
Gone, gone, divorc'd for ever. Help me, soldier,
To curse this madman, this industrious fool,
Who labor'd to be wretched: Prithee, curse me.
Vent. No.
Ant. Why?
Vent. You are too sensible already
Of what y' have done, too conscious of your failings;
And, like a scorpion, whipt by others first
To fury, sting yourself in mad revenge.
I would bring balm, and pour it in your wounds,
Cure your distemper'd mind, and heal your fortunes.
Ant. I know thou would'st.
Vent. I will.
Ant. Ha, ha, ha, ha!
Vent. You laugh.
Ant. I do, to see officious love
Give cordials to the dead.
Vent. You would be lost, then?
Ant. I am.
Vent. I say you are not. Try your fortune.

Ant. I have, to th' utmost. Dost thou think me desperate,
Without just cause? No, when I found all lost
Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,
And learnt to scorn it here; which now I do
So heartily, I think it is not worth
The cost of keeping.
Vent. Cæsar thinks not so;
He'll thank you for the gift he could not take.
You would be kill'd like Tully, would you? Do,
Hold out your throat to Cæsar, and die tamely.
Ant. No, I can kill myself; and so resolve.
Vent. I can die with you too, when time shall serve;
But fortune calls upon us now to live,
To fight, to conquer.
Ant. Sure thou dream'st, Ventidius.
Vent. No, 'tis you dream; you sleep away your hours
In desperate sloth, miscall'd philosophy.
Up, up, for honor's sake; twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief: by painful journeys
I led 'em, patient both of heat and hunger,
Down from the Parthian marches to the Nile.
'Twill do you good to see their sunburnt faces,
Their scarr'd cheeks and chopt hands: there's virtue in 'em,
They'll sell those mangled limbs at dearer rates
Than yon trim bands can buy.
Ant. Where left you them?
Vent. I said in Lower Syria.
Ant. Bring 'em hither;
There may be life in these.
Vent. They will not come.
Ant. Why didst thou mock my hopes with promis'd aids,
To double my despair? They're mutinous.
Vent. Most firm and loyal.
Ant. Yet they will not march
To succor me. O trifler!
Vent. They petition
You would make haste to head 'em.
Ant. I'm besieg'd.
Vent. There's but one way shut up: How came I hither?
Ant. I will not stir.
Vent. They would perhaps desire
A better reason.
Ant. I have never us'd
My soldiers to demand a reason of
My actions. Why did they refuse to march?
Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Ant. What was't they said?
Vent. They said they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Why should they fight, indeed, to make her conquer,
And make you more a slave? to gain you kingdoms,
Which, for a kiss, at your next midnight feast,
You'll sell to her? Then she new-names her jewels,
And calls this diamond such or such a tax;
Each pendant in her ear shall be a province.
Ant. Ventidius, I allow your tongue free licence
On all my other faults; but, on your life,
No word of Cleopatra; she deserves
More worlds than I can lose.
Vent. Behold, you Pow'rs,
To whom you have intrusted humankind!
See Europe, Afric, Asia, put in balance,
And all weigh'd down by one light, worthless woman!
I think the gods are Antonies and give,

Like prodigals, this nether world away
To none but wasteful hands.
Ant. You grow presumptuous.
Vent. I take the privilege of plain love to speak.
Ant. Plain love! plain arrogance, plain insolence!
Thy men are cowards; thou, an envious traitor,
Who, under seeming honesty, hast vented
The burden of thy rank, o'erflowing gall.
O that thou wert my equal; great in arms
As the first Cæsar was, that I might kill thee
Without a stain to honor!
Vent. You may kill me;
You have done more already,—call'd me traitor.
Ant. Art thou not one?
Vent. For showing you yourself,
Which none else durst have done? But had I been
That name, which I disdain to speak again,
I needed not have sought your abject fortunes,
Come to partake your fate, to die with you.
What hindered me t' have led my conqu'ring eagles
To fill Octavius' bands? I could have been
A traitor then, a glorious, happy traitor,
And not have been so call'd.
Ant. Forgive me, soldier;
I've been too passionate.
Vent. You thought me false;
Thought my old age betray'd you: kill me, sir;
Pray, kill me; yet you need not,—your unkindness
Has left your sword no work.
Ant. I did not think so;
I said it in my rage: Prithee, forgive me.
Why didst thou tempt my anger, by discovery
Of what I would not hear?
Vent. No prince but you
Could merit that sincerity I us'd,
Nor durst another man have ventur'd it;
But you, ere love misled your wand'ring eyes,
Were sure the chief and best of human race,
Fram'd in the very pride and boast of nature;
So perfect, that the gods who formed you, wonder'd
At their own skill, and cried, "A lucky hit
Has mended our design." Their envy hindered,
Else you had been immortal, and a pattern,
When Heav'n would work for ostentation sake
To copy out again.
Ant. But Cleopatra—
Go on; for I can bear it now.
Vent. No more.
Ant. Thou dar'st not trust my passion, but thou may'st;
Thou only lov'st; the rest have flattered me.
Vent. Heav'n's blessing on your heart for that kind word!
May I believe you love me? Speak again.
Ant. Indeed I do. Speak this, and this, and this. (*Hugging him*)
Thy praises were unjust; but, I'll deserve 'em,
And yet mend all. Do with me what thou wilt;
Lead me to victory! Thou know'st the way.
Vent. And, will you leave this—
Ant. Prithee, do not curse her,
And I will leave her; though, Heav'n knows, I love
Beyond life, conquest, empire, all, but honor;
But I will leave her.
Vent. That's my royal master;
And shall we fight?
Ant. I warrant thee, old soldier.

Thou shalt behold me once again in iron;
And at the head of our old troops, that beat
The Parthians, cry aloud, "Come, follow me!"
Vent. Oh, now I hear my emperor! in that word
Octavius fell. Gods, let me see that day,
And, if I have ten years behind, take all:
I'll thank you for th' exchange.
Ant. O Cleopatra!
Vent. Again?
Ant. I've done. In that last sigh she went.
Cæsar shall know what 'tis to force a lover
From all he holds most dear.
Vent. Methinks you breathe
Another soul: your looks are more divine;
You speak a hero, and you move a god.
Ant. Oh, thou hast fir'd me; my soul's up in arms,
And mans each part about me: once again,
That noble eagerness of fight has seiz'd me,—
That eagerness with which I darted upward
To Cassius' camp; in vain the steepy hill
Oppos'd my way; in vain a war of spears
Sung round my head, and planted on my shield;
I won the trenches while my foremost men
Lagg'd on the plain below.
Vent. Ye gods, ye gods,
For such another hour!
Ant. Come on, my soldier!
Our hearts and arms are still the same: I long
Once more to meet our foes; that thou and I,
Like Time and Death, marching before our troops,
May taste fate to 'em; mow 'em out a passage,
And, ent'ring where the foremost squadrons yield,
Begin the noble harvest of the field.
(*Exeunt*)

ACT II

Scene I

(*Enter* Cleopatra, Iras, *and* Alexas)

Cleo. What shall I do, or whither shall I turn?
Ventidius has o'ercome, and he will go.
Alex. He goes to fight for you.
Cleo. Then he would see me ere he went to fight.
Flatter me not: If once he goes, he's lost,
And all my hopes destroy'd.
Alex. Does this weak passion
Become a mighty queen?
Cleo. I am no queen.
Is this to be a queen, to be besieg'd
By yon insulting Roman, and to wait
Each hour the victor's chain? These ills are small:
For Antony is lost, and I can mourn
For nothing else but him. Now come, Octavius,
I have no more to lose! Prepare thy bands;
I'm fit to be a captive: Antony
Has taught my mind the fortune of a slave.
Iras. Call reason to assist you.
Cleo. I have none,
And none would have. My love's a noble madness,
Which shows the cause deserv'd it. Moderate sorrow
Fits vulgar love, and for a vulgar man:
But I have lov'd with such transcendent passion,
I soar'd, at first, quite out of reason's view,
And now am lost above it. No, I'm proud
'Tis true: Would Antony could see me now;

Think you he would not sigh, though he must leave me?
Sure he would sigh; for he is noble-natur'd,
And bears a tender heart: I know him well.
Ah, no, I know him not; I knew him once,
But now 'tis past.
Iras. Let it be past with you:
Forget him, madam.
Cleo. Never, never, Iras.
He once was mine; and once, though now 'tis gone,
Leaves a faint image of possession still.
Alex. Think him unconstant, cruel, and ungrateful.
Cleo. I cannot: if I could, those thoughts were vain!
Faithless, ungrateful, cruel though he be,
I still must love him.

(*Enter* CHARMION)

Now, what news, my Charmion?
Will he be kind? and will he not forsake me?
Am I to live, or die?—nay, do I live?
Or am I dead? for when he gave his answer,
Fate took the word, and then I liv'd, or died.
Char. I found him, madam—
Cleo. A long speech preparing?
If thou bring'st comfort, haste and give it me,
For never was more need.
Iras. I know he loves you.
Cleo. Had he been kind, her eyes had told me so
Before her tongue could speak it. Now she studies
To soften what he said; but give me death,
Just as he sent it, Charmion, undisguis'd,
And in the words he spoke.
Char. I found him, then,
Incompass'd round, I think, with iron statues;
So mute, so motionless his soldiers stood,
While awfully he cast his eyes about,
And ev'ry leader's hopes or fears survey'd:
Methought he look'd resolv'd, and yet not pleas'd.
When he beheld me struggling in the crowd,
He blush'd, and bade make way.
Alex. There's comfort yet.
Char. Ventidius fixed his eyes upon my passage
Severely, as he meant to frown me back,
And sullenly gave place: I told my message,
Just as you gave it, broken and disorder'd;
I number'd in it all your sighs and tears,
And while I mov'd your pitiful request,
That you but only beg'd a last farewell,
He fetch'd an inward groan; and ev'ry time
I nam'd you, sigh'd, as if his heart were breaking,
But, shun'd my eyes, and guiltily look'd down.
He seem'd not now that awful Antony,
Who shook an arm'd assembly with his nod;
But, making show as he would rub his eyes,
Disguis'd and blotted out a falling tear.
Cleo. Did he then weep? And was I worth a tear?
If what thou hast to say be not as pleasing,
Tell me no more, but let me die contented.
Char. He bid me say he knew himself so well,
He could deny you nothing if he saw you;
And therefore—
Cleo. Thou wouldst say, he would not see me?

Char. And therefore begg'd you not to use a power,
Which he could ill resist; yet he should ever
Respect you, as he ought.
Cleo. Is that a word
For Antony to use to Cleopatra?
O that faint word, *respect!* how I disdain it!
Disdain myself, for loving after it!
He should have kept that word for cold Octavia.
Respect is for a wife. Am I that thing,
That dull, insipid lump, without desires,
And without pow'r to give 'em?
Alex. You misjudge;
You see through love, and that deludes your sight;
As, what is straight, seems crooked through the water:
But I, who bear my reason undisturb'd,
Can see this Antony, this dreaded man,
A fearful slave, who fain would run away,
And shuns his master's eyes. If you pursue him,
My life on't, he still drags a chain along.
That needs must clog his flight.
Cleo. Could I believe thee!—
Alex. By ev'ry circumstance I know he loves.
True, he's hard prest, by interest and by honor;
Yet he but doubts, and parleys, and casts out
Many a long look for succor.
Cleo. He sends word,
He fears to see my face.
Alex. And would you more?
He shows his weakness who declines the combat,
And you must urge your fortune. Could he speak
More plainly? To my ears, the message sounds,
"Come to my rescue, Cleopatra, come;
Come, free me from Ventidius, from my tyrant:
See me, and give me a pretence to leave him!"
I hear his trumpets. This way he must pass.
Please you, retire a while; I'll work him first,
That he may bend more easy.
Cleo. You shall rule me;
But all, I fear, in vain.
(*Exit with* CHARMION *and* IRAS)
Alex. I fear so too,
Though I conceal'd my thoughts, to make her bold:
But 'tis our utmost means, and fate befriend it! (*Withdraws*)

(*Enter Lictors with fasces; one bearing the Eagle; then enter* ANTONY *with* VENTIDIUS, *followed by other Commanders*)

Ant. Octavius is the minion of blind chance,
But holds from virtue nothing.
Vent. Has he courage?
Ant. But just enough to season him from coward.
Oh, 'tis the coldest youth upon a charge,
The most deliberate fighter! if he ventures
(As in Illyria once, they say, he did,
To storm a town), 'tis when he cannot choose;
When all the world have fixt their eyes upon him;
And then he lives on that for seven years after;
But, at a close revenge he never fails.
Vent. I heard you challeng'd him.
Ant. I did, Ventidius.
What think'st thou was his answer? 'Twas so tame!—
He said, he had more ways than one to die;
I had not.
Vent. Poor!
Ant. He has more ways than one;
But he would choose 'em all before that one.

Vent. He first would choose an ague, or a fever.
Ant. No; it must be an ague, not a fever;
He has not warmth enough to die by that.
Vent. Or old age and a bed.
Ant. Ay, there's his choice;
He would live, like a lamp, to the last wink,
And crawl upon the utmost verge of life.
O Hercules! Why should a man like this,
Who dares not trust his fate for one great action,
Be all the care of Heav'n? Why should he lord it
O'er fourscore thousand men, of whom each one
Is braver than himself?
Vent. You conquer'd for him:
Philippi knows it; there you shar'd with him
That empire which your sword made all your own.
Ant. Fool that I was, upon my eagle's wings
I bore this wren, till I was tir'd with soaring,
And now he mounts above me.
Good Heav'ns, is this,—is this the man who braves me?
Who bids my age make way? Drives me before him
To the world's ridge, and sweeps me off like rubbish?
Vent. Sir, we lose time; the troops are mounted all.
Ant. Then give the word to march:
I long to leave this prison of a town,
To join thy legions; and, in open field,
Once more to show my face. Lead, my deliverer.

(*Enter* ALEXAS)

Alex. Great emperor,
In mighty arms renoun'd above mankind,
But, in soft pity to th' opprest, a god:
This message sends the mournful Cleopatra
To her departing lord.
Vent. Smooth sycophant!
Alex. A thousand wishes, and ten thousand prayers,
Millions of blessings wait you to the wars;
Millions of sighs and tears she sends you, too,
And would have sent
As many dear embraces to your arms,
As many parting kisses to your lips;
But those, she fears, have wearied you already.
Vent. (*aside*) False crocodile!
Alex. And yet she begs not now, you would not leave her;
That were a wish too mighty for her hopes,
Too presuming
For her low fortune, and your ebbing love;
That were a wish for her more prosp'rous days,
Her blooming beauty, and your growing kindness.
Ant. (*aside*) Well, I must man it out: What would the queen?
Alex. First, to these noble warriors, who attend
Your daring courage in the chase of fame,
(Too daring, and too dang'rous for her quiet)
She humbly recommends all she holds dear,
All her own cares and fears, the care of you.
Vent. Yes, witness Actium.
Ant. Let him speak, Ventidius.
Alex. You, when his matchless valor bears him forward,
With ardor too heroic, on his foes,
Fall down, as she would do, before his feet;
Lie in his way, and stop the paths of death:

Tell him, this god is not invulnerable,
That absent Cleopatra bleeds in him;
And, that you may remember her petition,
She begs you wear these trifles, as a pawn,
Which, at your wisht return, she will redeem
(*Gives jewels to the Commanders*)
With all the wealth of Egypt:
This to the great Ventidius she presents,
Whom she can never count her enemy,
Because he loves her lord.
Vent. Tell her I'll none on't;
I'm not asham'd of honest poverty;
Not all the diamonds of the east can bribe
Ventidius from his faith. I hope to see
These and the rest of all her sparkling store,
Where they shall more deservingly be plac'd.
Ant. And who must wear 'em then?
Vent. The wrong'd Octavia.
Ant. You might have spar'd that word.
Vent. And he that bribe.
Ant. But have I no remembrance?
Alex. Yes, a dear one;
Your slave, the queen—
Ant. My mistress.
Alex. Then your mistress;
Your mistress would, she says, have sent her soul,
But that you had long since; she humbly begs
This ruby bracelet, set with bleeding hearts,
(The emblems of her own) may bind your arm.
(*Presenting a bracelet*)
Vent. Now, my best lord, in honor's name I ask you,
For manhood's sake, and for your own dear safety,
Touch not these poison'd gifts,
Infected by the sender; touch 'em not;
Myriads of bluest plagues lie underneath 'em,
And more than aconite has dipt the silk.
Ant. Nay, now you grow too cynical, Ventidius:
A lady's favors may be worn with honor.
What, to refuse her bracelet! On my soul,
When I lie pensive in my tent alone,
'Twill pass the wakeful hours of winter nights,
To tell these pretty beads upon my arm,
To count for every one a soft embrace,
A melting kiss at such and such a time,
And now and then the fury of her love,
When—And what harm's in this?
Alex. None, none, my lord,
But what's to her, that now 'tis past for ever.
Ant. (*going to tie it*) We soldiers are so awkward—help me tie it.
Alex. In faith, my lord, we courtiers, too, are awkward
In these affairs: so are all men indeed:
Even I, who am not one. But shall I speak?
Ant. Yes, freely.
Alex. Then, my lord, fair hands alone
Are fit to tie it; she, who sent it, can.
Vent. Hell, death! This eunuch pander ruins you.
You will not see her?
(ALEXAS *whispers an Attendant, who goes out*)
Ant. But to take my leave.
Vent. Then I have wash'd an Æthiop. Y'are undone;
Y'are in the toils; y'are taken; y'are destroy'd:
Her eyes do Cæsar's work.
Ant. You fear too soon.
I'm constant to myself: I know my strength;
And yet she shall not think me barbarous neither,
Born in the depths of Afric: I'm a Roman,
Bred in the rules of soft humanity.
A guest, and kindly us'd, should bid farewell.

Vent. You do not know
How weak you are to her, how much an infant:
You are not proof against a smile or glance;
A sigh will quite disarm you.
Ant. See, she comes!
Now you shall find your error. Gods, I thank you:
I form'd the danger greater than it was,
And, now 'tis near, 'tis lessen'd.
Vent. Mark the end yet.

(*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS)

Ant. Well, madam, we are met.
Cleo. Is this a meeting?
Then, we must part?
Ant. We must.
Cleo. Who says we must?
Ant. Our own hard fates.
Cleo. We make those fates ourselves.
Ant. Yes, we have made 'em; we have lov'd each other
Into our mutual ruin.
Cleo. The gods have seen my joys with envious eyes;
I have no friends in Heav'n; and all the world
(As 'twere the bus'ness of mankind to part us)
Is arm'd against my love: ev'n you yourself
Join with the rest; you, you are arm'd against me.
Ant. I will be justified in all I do
To late posterity, and therefore hear me.
If I mix a lie
With any truth, reproach me freely with it;
Else favor me with silence.
Cleo. You command me,
And I am dumb.
Vent. I like this well; he shows authority.
Ant. That I derive my ruin
From you alone—
Cleo. O Heavn's! I ruin you!
Ant. You promis'd me your silence, and you break it
Ere I have scarce begun.
Cleo. Well, I obey you.
Ant. When I beheld you first, it was in Egypt.
Ere Cæsar saw your eyes, you gave me love,
And were too young to know it; that I settled
Your father in his throne, was for your sake;
I left th' acknowledgment for time to ripen.
Cæsar stept in, and, with a greedy hand,
Pluck'd the green fruit, ere the first blush of red,
Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my lord,
And was, beside, too great for me to rival;
But I deserv'd you first, though he enjoy'd you.
When, after, I beheld you in Cilicia,
An enemy to Rome, I pardon'd you.
Cleo. I clear'd myself—
Ant. Again you break your promise.
I lov'd you still, and took your weak excuses,
Took you into my bosom, stain'd by Cæsar,
And not half mine: I went to Egypt with you,
And hid me from the bus'ness of the world,
Shut out inquiring nations from my sight,
To give whole years to you.
Vent. (*aside*) Yes, to your shame be't spoken.
Ant. How I lov'd,
Witness, ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
That danc'd away with down upon your feet,
As all your bus'ness were to count my passion!

One day past by, and nothing saw but love;
Another came, and still 'twas only love:
The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I untir'd with loving.
I saw you ev'ry day, and all the day;
And ev'ry day was still but as the first,
So eager was I still to see you more.
Vent. 'Tis all too true.
Ant. Fulvia, my wife, grew jealous,
(As she indeed had reason), rais'd a war
In Italy, to call me back.
Vent. But yet
You went not.
Ant. While within your arms I lay,
The world fell moldering from my hands each hour,
And left me scarce a grasp—I thank your love for't.
Vent. Well push'd: that last was home.
Cleo. Yet may I speak?
Ant. If I have urg'd a falsehood, yes; else, not.
Your silence says I have not. Fulvia died,
(Pardon, you gods, with my unkindness died);
To set the world at peace, I took Octavia,
This Cæsar's sister; in her pride of youth,
And flow'r of beauty, did I wed that lady,
Whom blushing I must praise, because I left her.
You call'd; my love obey'd the fatal summons:
This rais'd the Roman arms; the cause was yours.
I would have fought by land, where I was stronger;
You hindered it; yet, when I fought at sea,
Forsook me fighting; and (O stain to honor!
O lasting shame!) I knew not that I fled;
But fled to follow you.
Vent. What haste she made to hoist her purple sails!
And, to appear magnificent in flight,
Drew half our strength away.
Ant. All this you caus'd.
And would you multiply more ruins on me?
This honest man, my best, my only friend,
Has gather'd up the shipwreck of my fortunes;
Twelve legions I have left, my last recruits,
And you have watch'd the news, and bring your eyes
To seize them too. If you have aught to answer,
Now speak, you have free leave.
Alex. (*aside*) She stands confounded:
Despair is in her eyes.
Vent. Now lay a sigh i' th' way, to stop his passage:
Prepare a tear, and bid it for his legions;
'Tis like they shall be sold.
Cleo. How shall I plead my cause, when you, my judge,
Already have condemn'd me? Shall I bring
The love you bore me for my advocate?
That now is turn'd against me, that destroys me;
For love, once past, is at the best forgotten,
But oftener sours to hate: 'twill please my lord
To ruin me, and therefore I'll be guilty.
But could I once have thought it would have pleas'd you,
That you would pry, with narrow, searching eyes,
Into my faults, severe to my destruction,
And watching all advantages with care,
That serve to make me wretched? Speak, my lord,
For I end here. Though I deserve this usage,
Was it like you to give it?
Ant. O, you wrong me,
To think I sought this parting, or desir'd

To accuse you more than what will clear myself,
And justify this breach.
Cleo. Thus low I thank you;
And, since my innocence will not offend,
I shall not blush to own it.
Vent. After this,
I think she'll blush at nothing.
Cleo. You seemed griev'd
(And therein you are kind), that Cæsar first
Enjoy'd my love, though you deserv'd it better:
I grieve for that, my lord, much more than you;
For had I first been yours, it would have sav'd
My second choice: I never had been his,
And ne'er had been but yours. But Cæsar first,
You say, possess'd my love. Not so, my lord:
He first possess'd my person; you, my love.
Cæsar lov'd me; but I lov'd Antony.
If I endur'd him after, 'twas because
I judg'd it due to the first name of men;
And, half constrain'd, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force.
Vent. O Syren! Syren!
Yet grant that all the love she boasts were true,
Has she not ruin'd you? I still urge that,
The fatal consequence.
Cleo. The consequence indeed,
For I dare challenge him, my greatest foe,
To say it was design'd: 'tis true, I lov'd you,
And kept you from an uneasy wife,—
Such Fulvia was.
Yes, but he'll say, you left Octavia for me;—
And, can you blame me to receive that love,
Which quitted such desert for worthless me?
How often have I wish'd some other Cæsar,
Great as the first, and as the second young,
Would court my love, to be refus'd for you!
Vent. Words, words; but Actium, sir; remember Actium.
Cleo. Ev'n there, I dare his malice. True, I counsel'd
To fight at sea; but I betray'd you not.
I fled, but not to the enemy. 'Twas fear;
Would I had been a man, not to have fear'd!
For none would then have envied me your friendship,
Who envy me your love.
Ant. We're both unhappy:
If nothing else, yet our ill fortune parts us.
Speak; would you have me perish by my stay?
Cleo. If as a friend you ask my judgment, go;
If as a lover, stay. If you must perish—
'Tis a hard word—but stay.
Vent. See now th' effects of her so boasted love!
She strives to drag you down to ruin with her;
But, could she 'scape without you, oh, how soon
Would she let go her hold, and haste to shore,
And never look behind!
Cleo. Then judge my love by this. (*Giving* ANTONY *a writing*) Could I have borne
A life or death, a happiness or woe,
From yours divided, this had giv'n me means.
Ant. By Hercules, the writing of Octavius!
I know it well: 'tis that proscribing hand,
Young as it was, that led the way to mine,

And left me but the second place in murder.—
See, see, Ventidius! here he offers Egypt,
And joins all Syria to it, as a present,
So, in requital, she forsake my fortunes,
And join her arms with his.
Cleo. And yet you leave me!
You leave me, Antony; and yet I love you.
Indeed I do: I have refus'd a kingdom;
That's a trifle;
For I could part with life, with anything,
But only you. O, let me die but with you!
Is that a hard request?
Ant. Next living with you,
'Tis all that Heav'n can give.
Alex. (*aside*) He melts; we conquer.
Cleo. No, you shall go: your int'rest calls you hence;
Yes, your dear interest pulls too strong for these
Weak arms to hold you here. (*Takes his hand*) Go; leave me, soldier.
(For you're no more a lover): leave me dying:
Push me all pale and panting from your bosom,
And, when your march begins, let one run after,
Breathless almost for joy, and cry, "She's dead!"
The soldiers shout; you then, perhaps, may sigh,
And muster all your Roman gravity;
Ventidius chides; and straight your brow clears up,
As I had never been.
Ant. Gods, 'tis too much; too much for man to bear.
Cleo. What is't for me then,
A weak, forsaken woman, and a lover?
Here let me breathe my last: envy me not
This minute in your arms: I'll die apace,
As fast as e'er I can, and end your trouble.
Ant. Die! rather let me perish; loos'n'd nature
Leap from its hinges, sink the props of Heav'n,
And fall the skies to crush the nether world!
My eyes, my soul, my all!
(*Embraces her*)
Vent. And what's this toy,
In balance with your fortune, honour, fame?
Ant. What is't, Ventidius?—it outweighs 'em all;
Why, we have more than conquer'd Cæsar now:
My queen's not only innocent, but loves me.
This, this is she who drags me down to ruin!
"But, could she 'scape without me, with what haste
Would she let slip her hold, and make to shore,
And never look behind!"
Down on thy knees, blasphemer as thou art,
And ask forgiveness of wrong'd innocence.
Vent. I'll rather die, than take it. Will you go?
Ant. Go! Whither? Go from all that's excellent?
Faith, honour, virtue, all good things forbid,
That I should go from her, who sets my love
Above the price of kingdoms! Give, you gods,
Give to your boy, your Cæsar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleas'd with less than Cleopatra.
Cleo. She's wholly yours. My heart's so full of joy
That I shall do some wild extravagance
Of love, in public; and the foolish world

Which knows not tenderness, will think me mad.

Vent. O women! women! women! all the gods
Have not such pow'r of doing good to man,
As you of doing harm. (*Exit*)

Ant. Our men are arm'd;
Unbar the gate that looks to Cæsar's camp:
I would revenge the treachery he meant me;
And long security makes conquest easy.
I'm eager to return before I go;
For all the pleasures I have known beat thick
On my remembrance.—How I long for night!
That both the sweets of mutual love may try,
And triumph once o'er Cæsar ere we die.
(*Exeunt*)

ACT III

Scene I

(*At one door enter* Cleopatra, Charmion, Iras, *and* Alexas, *a Train of Egyptians: at the other,* Antony *and Romans. The entrance on both sides is prepar'd by music; the trumpets first sounding on* Antony's *part: then answer'd by timbrels, etc., on* Cleopatra's. Charmion *and* Iras *hold a laurel wreath betwixt them. A Dance of Egyptians. After the ceremony,* Cleopatra *crowns* Antony.)

Ant. I thought how those white arms would fold me in,
And strain me close, and melt me into love;
So pleas'd with that sweet image, I sprung forwards,
And added all my strength to every blow.

Cleo. Come to me, come, my soldier, to my arms!
You've been too long away from my embraces;
But, when I have you fast, and all my own,
With broken murmurs, and with amorous sighs,
I'll say you were unkind, and punish you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiss.

Ant. My brighter Venus!

Cleo. O my greater Mars!

Ant. Thou join'st us well, my love!
Suppose me come from the Phlegræan plains,
Where gasping giants lay, cleft by my sword,
And mountain-tops par'd off each other blow,
To bury those I slew. Receive me, goddess!
Let Cæsar spread his subtle nets like Vulcan;
In thy embraces I would be beheld
By Heav'n and earth at once,
And make their envy what they meant their sport.
Let those, who took us, blush; I would love on
With awful state, regardless of their frowns,
As their superior god.
There's no satiety of love in thee:
Enjoy'd, thou still art new; perpetual spring
Is in thy arms; the ripen'd fruit but falls,
And blossoms rise to fill its empty place;
And I grow rich by giving.

(*Enter* Ventidius, *and stands apart*)

Alex. O, now the danger's past, your general comes!
He joins not in your joys, nor minds your triumphs;

But, with contracted brows, looks frowning on,
As envying your success.
Ant. Now, on my soul, he loves me; truly loves me:
He never flatter'd me in any vice,
But awes me with his virtue: ev'n this minute,
Methinks he has a right of chiding me.
Lead to the temple: I'll avoid his presence;
It checks too strong upon me.
(*Exeunt the rest.*
As ANTONY *is going,* VENTIDIUS *pulls him by the robe*)
Vent. Emperor!
Ant. (*looking back*) 'Tis the old argument; I prithee, spare me.
Vent. But this one hearing, emperor.
Ant. Let go
My robe; or, by my father Hercules—
Vent. By Hercules his father, that's yet greater,
I bring you somewhat you would wish to know.
Ant. Thou see'st we are observ'd; attend me here,
And I'll return. (*Exit*)
Vent. I'm waning in his favour, yet I love him;
I love this man, who runs to meet his ruin;
And sure the gods, like me, are fond of him:
His virtues lie so mingled with his crimes,
As would confound their choice to punish one,
And not reward the other.

(*Enter* ANTONY)

Ant. We can conquer,
You see, without your aid.
We have dislodg'd their troops;
They look on us at distance, and, like curs
Scap'd from the lion's paws, they bay far off,
And lick their wounds, and faintly threaten war.
Five thousand Romans, with their faces upward,
Lie breathless on the plain.
Vent. 'Tis well; and he,
Who lost 'em, could have spar'd ten thousand more.
Yet if, by this advantage, you could gain
An easier peace, while Cæsar doubts the chance
Of arms—
Ant. O, think not on't, Ventidius!
The boy pursues my ruin; he'll no peace:
His malice is considerate in advantage.
O, he's the coolest murderer! so staunch,
He kills, and keeps his temper.
Vent. Have you no friend
In all his army, who has power to move him?
Mæcenas, or Agrippa, might do much.
Ant. They're both too deep in Cæsar's interests.
We'll work it out by dint of sword, or perish.
Vent. Fain I would find some other.
Ant. Thank thy love.
Some four or five such victories as this
Will save thy further pains.
Vent. Expect no more; Cæsar is on his guard;
I know, sir, you have conquer'd against odds;
But still you draw supplies from one poor town,
And of Egyptians: he has all the world,
And, at his back, nations come pouring in,
To fill the gaps you make. Pray, think again.
Ant. Why dost thou drive me from myself, to search
For foreign aids? to hunt my memory,
And range all o'er a waste and barren place
To find a friend? The wretched have no friends.

Yet I had one, the bravest youth of Rome,
Whom Cæsar loves beyond the love of women:
He could resolve his mind, as fire does wax,
From that hard rugged image melt him down,
And mould him in what softer form he pleas'd.
Vent. Him would I see; that man, of all the world;
Just such a one we want.
Ant. He lov'd me too;
I was his soul; he liv'd not but in me:
We were so clos'd within each other's breasts,
The rivets were not found that join'd us first.
That does not reach us yet: we were so mixt,
As meeting streams, both to ourselves were lost;
We were one mass; we could not give or take,
But from the same; for he was I, I he.
Vent. (*aside*) He moves as I would wish him.
Ant. After this,
I need not tell his name: 'twas Dolabella.
Vent. He's now in Cæsar's camp.
Ant. No matter where,
Since he's no longer mine. He took unkindly
That I forbade him Cleopatra's sight,
Because I fear'd he lov'd her: he confess'd,
He had a warmth, which, for my sake, he stifled;
For 'twere impossible that two, so one,
Should not have lov'd the same. When he departed,
He took no leave; and that confirm'd my thoughts.
Vent. It argues that he lov'd you more than her,
Else he had stayed; but he perceiv'd you jealous,
And would not grieve his friend: I know he loves you.
Ant. I should have seen him, then, ere now.
Vent. Perhaps
He has thus long been lab'ring for your peace.
Ant. Would he were here!
Vent. Would you believe he lov'd you?
I read your answer in your eyes; you would.
Not to conceal it longer, he has sent
A messenger from Cæsar's camp, with letters.
Ant. Let him appear.
Vent. I'll bring him instantly.
(*Exit* VENTIDIUS, *and re-enters immediately with* DOLABELLA)
Ant. 'Tis he himself! himself, by holy friendship!
(*Runs to embrace him*)
Art thou return'd at last, my better half?
Come, give me all myself! Let me not live,
If the young bridegroom, longing for his night,
Was ever half so fond.
Dola. I must be silent, for my soul is busy
About a nobler work: she's new come home,
Like a long absent man, and wanders o'er
Each room, a stranger to her own, to look
If all be safe.
Ant. Thou hast what's left of me;
For I am now so sunk from what I was,
Thou find'st me at my lowest water-mark.
The rivers that ran in, and rais'd my fortunes,
Are all dried up, or take another course:
What I have left is from my native spring;
I've still a heart that swells, in scorn of fate,

And lifts me to my banks.
Dola. Still you are lord of all the world to me.
Ant. Why, then I yet am so; for thou art all.
If I had any joy when thou wert absent,
I grudg'd it to myself; methought I robb'd
Thee of thy part. But, O my Dolabella!
Thou hast beheld me other than I am.
Hast thou not seen my morning chambers fill'd
With sceptr'd slaves, who waited to salute me?
With eastern monarchs, who forgot the sun
To worship my uprising? Menial kings
Ran coursing up and down my palace-yard,
Stood silent in my presence, watch'd my eyes,
And, at my least command, all started out,
Like racers to the goal.
Dola. Slaves to your fortune.
Ant. Fortune is Cæsar's now; and what am I?
Vent. What you have made yourself; I will not flatter.
Ant. Is this friendly done?
Dola. Yes, when his end is so; I must join with him:
Indeed I must, and yet you must not chide;
Why am I else your friend?
Ant. Take heed, young man,
How thou upbraid'st my love: the queen has eyes,
And thou, too, hast a soul. Canst thou remember,
When, swell'd with hatred, thou beheld'st her first,
As accessory to thy brother's death?
Dola. Spare my remembrance; 'twas a guilty day,
And still the blush hangs here.
Ant. To clear herself,
For sending him no aid, she came from Egypt.
Her galley down the silver Cydnus row'd,
The tackling silk, the streamers wav'd with gold;
The gentle winds were lodg'd in purple sails:
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were plac'd,
Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.
Dola. No more; I would not hear it.
Ant. Oh, you must!
She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,
Neglecting, she could take 'em: boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning, with their painted wings, the winds
That played about her face. But if she smil'd,
A darting glory seem'd to blaze abroad,
That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object: To soft flutes
The silver oars kept time; and while they played,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight;
And both to thought. 'Twas Heaven, or somewhat more:
For she so charm'd all hearts, that gazing crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice.
Then, Dolabella, where was then thy soul?
Was not thy fury quite disarm'd with wonder?
Didst thou not shrink behind me from those eyes,
And whisper in my ear, "O, tell her not
That I accus'd her with my brother's death"?

Dola. And should my weakness be a plea for yours?
Mine was an age when love might be excus'd,
When kindly warmth, and when my springing youth
Made it a debt to nature. Yours—
Vent. Speak boldly.
Yours, he would say, in your declining age,
When no more heat was left but what you forc'd,
When all the sap was needful for the trunk,
When it went down, then you constrain'd the course,
And robb'd from nature, to supply desire;
In you (I would not use so harsh a word)
'Tis but plain dotage.
Ant. Ha!
Dola. 'Twas urg'd too home.
But yet the loss was private that I made;
'Twas but myself I lost: I lost no legions;
I had no world to lose, no people's love.
Ant. This from a friend?
Dola. Yes, Antony, a true one;
A friend so tender, that each word I speak
Stabs my own heart before it reach your ear.
O, judge me not less kind because I chide!
To Cæsar I excuse you.
Ant. O ye gods!
Have I then liv'd to be excus'd to Cæsar?
Dola. As to your equal.
Ant. Well, he's but my equal:
While I wear this, he never shall be more.
Dola. I bring conditions from him.
Ant. Are they noble?
Methinks thou shouldst not bring 'em else; yet he
Is full of deep dissembling; knows no honor
Divided from his int'rest. Fate mistook him;
For nature meant him for an usurer:
He's fit indeed to buy, not conquer kingdoms.
Vent. Then, granting this,
What pow'r was theirs who wrought so hard a temper
To honorable terms?
Ant. It was my Dolabella, or some god.
Dola. Nor I, nor yet Mæcenas, nor Agrippa:
They were your enemies; and I, a friend,
Too weak alone; yet 'twas a Roman's deed.
Ant. 'Twas like a Roman done: show me that man
Who has preserv'd my life, my love, my honor;
Let me but see his face.
Vent. That task is mine,
And, Heav'n, thou know'st how pleasing.
(*Exit* VENTIDIUS)
Dola. You'll remember
To whom you stand oblig'd?
Ant. When I forget it.
Be thou unkind, and that's my greatest curse.
My queen shall thank him too.
Dola. I fear she will not.
Ant. But she shall do't: The queen, my Dolabella!
Hast thou not still some grudgings of thy fever?
Dola. I would not see her lost.
Ant. When I forsake her,
Leave me, my better stars! for she has truth
Beyond her beauty. Cæsar tempted her,
At no less price than kingdoms, to betray me;
But she resisted all: and yet thou chid'st me
For loving her too well. Could I do so?
Dola. Yes; there's my reason.

(*Re-enter* VENTIDIUS, *with* OCTAVIA, *leading* ANTONY'S *two little Daughters*)

Ant. Where?—Octavia there!
(*Starting back*)

Vent. What, is she poison to you? A disease?
Look on her, view her well, and those she brings:
Are they all strangers to your eyes? has nature
No secret call, no whisper they are yours?
Dola. For shame, my lord, if not for love, receive 'em
With kinder eyes. If you confess a man,
Meet 'em, embrace 'em, bid 'em welcome to you.
Your arms should open, ev'n without your knowledge,
To clasp 'em in; your feet should turn to wings,
To bear you to 'em; and your eyes dart out
And aim a kiss ere you could reach the lips.
Ant. I stood amaz'd, to think how they came hither.
Vent. I sent for 'em; I brought 'em in unknown
To Cleopatra's guards.
Dola. Yet are you cold?
Octav. Thus long I have attended for my welcome;
Which, as a stranger, sure I might expect.
Who am I?
Ant. Cæsar's sister.
Octav. That's unkind.
Had I been nothing more than Cæsar's sister,
Know, I had still remain'd in Cæsar's camp;
But your Octavia, your much injur'd wife,
Though banish'd from your bed, driv'n from your house,
In spite of Cæsar's sister, still is yours.
'Tis true, I have a heart disdains your coldness,
And prompts me not to seek what you should offer;
But a wife's virtue still surmounts that pride.
I come to claim you as my own; to show
My duty first; to ask, nay beg, your kindness:
Your hand, my lord; 'tis mine, and I will have it.
(*Taking his hand*)
Vent. Do, take it; thou deserv'st it.
Dola. On my soul,
And so she does: she's neither too submissive,
Nor yet too haughty; but so just a mean
Shows, as it ought, a wife and Roman too.
Ant. I fear, Octavia, you have begg'd my life.
Octav. Begg'd it, my lord?
Ant. Yes, begg'd it, my ambassadress;
Poorly and basely begg'd it of your brother.
Octav. Poorly and basely I could never beg;
Nor could my brother grant.
Ant. Shall I, who to my kneeling slave, could say,
"Rise up, and be a king," shall I fall down
And cry, "Forgive me, Cæsar!" Shall I set
A man, my equal, in the place of Jove,
As he could give me being? No; that word
Forgive would choke me up,
And die upon my tongue.
Dola. You shall not need it.
Ant. I will not need it. Come, you've all betray'd me,—
My friend too!—to receive some vile conditions.
My wife has bought me with her prayers and tears;
And now I must become her branded slave.
In every peevish mood she will upbraid
The life she gave: if I but look awry,
She cries "I'll tell my brother."
Octav. My hard fortune
Subjects me still to your unkind mistakes.
But the conditions I have brought are such,

You need not blush to take: I love your honor,
Because 'tis mine; it never shall be said,
Octavia's husband was her brother's slave.
Sir, you are free; free, ev'n from her you loathe;
For, though my brother bargains for your love,
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,
I have a soul like yours; I cannot take
Your love as alms, nor beg what I deserve.
I'll tell my brother we are reconcil'd;
He shall draw back his troops, and you shall march
To rule the East: I may be dropt at Athens;
No matter where. I never will complain,
But only keep the barren name of wife,
And rid you of the trouble.

Vent. Was ever such a strife
of sullen honour!
Both scorn to be oblig'd.

Dola. O, she has toucht him in the tender'st part;
See how he reddens with despite and shame,
To be outdone in generosity!

Vent. See how he winks! how he dries up a tear,
That fain would fall!

Ant. Octavia, I have heard you, and must praise
The greatness of your soul;
But cannot yield to what you have propos'd:
For I can ne'er be conquer'd but by love;
And you do all for duty. You would free me,
And would be dropt at Athens; was't not so?

Octav. It was, my lord.

Ant. Then I must be oblig'd
To one who loves me not; who, to herself,
May call me thankless and ungrateful man:
I'll not endure it; no.

Vent. (*aside*) I'm glad it pinches there.

Octav. Would you triumph o'er poor Octavia's virtue?
That pride was all I had to bear me up;
That you might think you ow'd me for your life,
And ow'd it to my duty, not my love.
I have been injur'd, and my haughty soul
Could brook but ill the man who slights my bed.

Ant. Therefore you love me not.

Octav. Therefore, my lord,
I should not love you.

Ant. Therefore you would leave me?

Octav. And therefore I should leave you—if I could.

Dola. Her soul's too great, after such injuries,
To say she loves; and yet she lets you see it.
Her modesty and silence plead her cause.

Ant. O, Dolabella, which way shall I turn?
I find a secret yielding in my soul;
But Cleopatra, who would die with me,
Must she be left? Pity pleads for Octavia;
But does it not plead more for Cleopatra?

Vent. Justice and pity both plead for Octavia;
For Cleopatra, neither.
One would be ruin'd with you; but she first
Had ruin'd you: the other you have ruined,
And yet she would preserve you.
In everything their merits are unequal.

Ant. O, my distracted soul!

Octav. Sweet Heav'n compose it!
Come, come, my lord, if I can pardon you,
Methinks you should accept it. Look on these;

Are they not yours? or stand they thus neglected,
As they are mine? Go to him, children, go;
Kneel to him, take him by the hand, speak to him;
For you may speak, and he may own you too,
Without a blush; and so he cannot all
His children: go, I say, and pull him to me,
And pull him to yourselves, from that bad woman.
You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms;
And you, Antonia, clasp about his waist:
If he will shake you off, if he will dash you
Against the pavement, you must bear it, children;
For you are mine, and I was born to suffer. (*Here the children go to him, etc.*)

Vent. Was ever sight so moving? Emperor!

Dola. Friend!

Octav. Husband!

Both Child. Father!

Ant. I am vanquish'd: take me,
Octavia; take me, children; share me all.
(*Embracing them*)
I've been a thriftless debtor to your loves,
And run out much, in riot, from your stock;
But all shall be amended.

Octav. O blest hour!

Dola. O happy change!

Vent. My joy stops at my tongue;
But it has found two channels here for one,
And bubbles out above.

Ant. (*to Octavia*) This is thy triumph; lead me where thou wilt,
Ev'n to thy brother's camp.

Octav. All there are yours.

(*Enter* ALEXAS *hastily*)

Alex. The queen, my mistress, sir, and yours—

Ant. 'Tis past.—
Octavia, you shall stay this night: tomorrow,
Cæsar and we are one.
(*Exit leading* OCTAVIA; DOLABELLA *and the children follow*)

Vent. There's news for you; run, my officious eunuch,
Be sure to be the first; haste forward:
Haste, my dear eunuch, haste. (*Exit*)

Alex. This downright fighting fool, this thick-skull'd hero,
This blunt, unthinking instrument of death,
With plain dull virtue has outgone my wit.
Pleasure forsook my earliest infancy;
The luxury of others robb'd my cradle,
And ravish'd thence the promise of a man.
Cast out from nature, disinherited
Of what her meanest children claim by kind,
Yet greatness kept me from contempt: that's gone.
Had Cleopatra follow'd my advice,
Then he had been betray'd who now forsakes.
She dies for love; but she has known its joys:
Gods, is this just, that I, who know no joys,
Must die, because she loves?

(*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, *and Train*)

O madam, I have seen what blasts my eyes!
Octavia's here!

Cleo. Peace with that raven's note.
I know it too; and now am in
The pangs of death.

Alex. You are no more a queen;
Egypt is lost.

Cleo. What tell'st thou me of Egypt?
My life, my soul is lost! Octavia has him!
O fatal name to Cleopatra's love!
My kisses, my embraces, now are hers;

While I—But thou hast seen my rival; speak,
Does she deserve this blessing? Is she fair?
Bright as a goddess? And is all perfection
Confin'd to her? It is. Poor I was made
Of that coarse matter, which, when she was finish'd,
The gods threw by for rubbish.
Alex. She's indeed a very miracle.
Cleo. Death to my hopes, a miracle!
Alex. (*bowing*) A miracle;
I mean of goodness; for in beauty, madam,
You make all wonders cease.
Cleo. I was too rash:
Take this in part of recompense. But, oh! (*Giving a ring*)
I fear thou flatter'st me.
Char. She comes! she's here!
Iras. Fly, madam, Cæsar's sister!
Cleo. Were she the sister of the thund'rer Jove,
And bore her brother's lightning in her eyes,
Thus would I face my rival.
(*Meets* OCTAVIA *with* VENTIDIUS. OCTAVIA *bears up to her. Their trains come up on either side*)
Octav. I need not ask if you are Cleopatra;
Your haughty carriage—
Cleo. Shows I am a queen:
Nor need I ask you who you are.
Octav. A Roman:
A name that makes and can unmake a queen.
Cleo. Your lord, the man who serves me, is a Roman.
Octav. He was a Roman till he lost that name
To be a slave in Egypt; but I come
To free him thence.
Cleo. Peace, peace, my lover's Juno.
When he grew weary of that household clog,
He chose my easier bonds.
Octav. I wonder not
Your bonds are easy: you have long been practis'd
In that lascivious art: he's not the first
For whom you spread your snares: let Cæsar witness.
Cleo. I lov'd not Cæsar; 'twas but gratitude
I paid his love: the worst your malice can,
Is but to say the greatest of mankind
Has been my slave. The next, but far above him
In my esteem, is he whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine.
Octav. (*coming up close to her*) I would view nearer
That face which has so long usurp'd my right,
To find th' inevitable charms that catch
Mankind so sure, that ruin'd my dear lord.
Cleo. O, you do well to search; for had you known
But half these charms, you had not lost his heart.
Octav. Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modest wife! Shame of our sex,
Dost thou not blush to own those black endearments,
That make sin pleasing?
Cleo. You may blush, who want 'em.
If bounteous nature, if indulgent Heav'n
Have giv'n me charms to please the bravest man,
Should I not thank 'em? Should I be asham'd,
And not be proud? I am, that he has lov'd me;
And, when I love not him, Heav'n change this face
For one like that.
Octav. Thou lov'st him not so well.
Cleo. I love him better, and deserve him more.

Octav. You do not; cannot: you have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him scorn'd abroad, but Cleopatra?
At Actium, who betray'd him? Cleopatra.
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? Only Cleopatra.
Cleo. Yet she who loves him best is Cleopatra.
If you have suffer'd, I have suffer'd more.
You bear the specious title of a wife,
To gild your cause, and draw the pitying world
To favor it: the world condemns poor me.
For I have lost my honor, lost my fame,
And stain'd the glory of my royal house,
And all to bear the branded name of mistress.
There wants but life, and that too I would lose
For him I love.
Octav. Be't so, then; take thy wish.
(*Exit cum suis*)
Cleo. And 'tis my wish,
Now he is lost for whom alone I liv'd.
My sight grows dim, and every object dances
And swims before me in the maze of death.
My spirits, while they were oppos'd, kept up;
They could not sink beneath a rival's scorn!
But now she's gone, they faint.
Alex. Mine have had leisure
To recollect their strength, and furnish counsel
To ruin her who else must ruin you.
Cleo. Vain promiser!
Lead me, my Charmion; nay, your hand too, Iras.
My grief has weight enough to sink you both.
Conduct me to some solitary chamber,
And draw the curtains round;
Then leave me to myself, to take alone
My fill of grief:
There I till death will his unkindness weep;
As harmless infants moan themselves asleep.

(*Exeunt*)

ACT IV

Scene I

(*Enter* Antony *and* Dolabella)

Dola. Why would you shift it from yourself on me?
Can you not tell her you must part?
Ant. I cannot.
I could pull out an eye, and bid it go,
And t'other should not weep. O Dolabella,
How many deaths are in this word *Depart!*
I dare not trust my tongue to tell her so:
One look of hers would thaw me into tears,
And I should melt till I were lost again.
Dola. Then let Ventidius;
He's rough by nature.
Ant. Oh, he'll speak too harshly;
He'll kill her with the news: Thou, only thou.
Dola. Nature has cast me in so soft a mold,
That but to hear a story, feign'd for pleasure,
Of some sad lover's death, moistens my eyes,
And robs me of my manhood. I should speak
So faintly, with such fear to grieve her heart,
She'd not believe it earnest.

Ant. Therefore,—therefore
Thou only, thou art fit. Think thyself me;
And when thou speak'st (but let it first be long),
Take off the edge from every sharper sound,
And let our parting be as gently made
As other loves begin. Wilt thou do this?

Dola. What you have said so sinks into my soul
That, if I must speak, I shall speak just so.

Ant. I leave you then to your sad task: farewell.
I sent her word to meet you.
(*Goes to the door, and comes back*)
I forgot;
Let her be told I'll make her peace with mine:
Her crown and dignity shall be preserv'd;
If I have power with Cæsar. Oh, be sure
To think on that.

Dola. Fear not, I will remember.

(ANTONY *goes again to the door, and comes back*)

Ant. And tell her, too, how much I was constrain'd;
I did not this but with extremest force:
Desire her not to hate my memory,
For I still cherish hers,—insist on that.

Dola. Trust me, I'll not forget it.

Ant. Then that's all.
(*Goes out, and returns again*)
Wilt thou forgive my fondness [1] this once more?
Tell her, though we shall never meet again,
If I should hear she took another love,
The news would break my heart. Now I must go;
For every time I have return'd, I feel
My soul more tender; and my next command
Would be to bid her stay, and ruin both.
(*Exit*)

[1] folly

Dola. Men are but children of a larger growth,
Our appetites as apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain;
And yet the soul, shut up in her dark room,
Viewing so clear abroad, at home sees nothing;
But, like a mole in earth, busy and blind,
Works all her folly up, and casts it outward
To the world's open view: thus I discover'd,
And blam'd the love of ruin'd Antony;
Yet wish that I were he, to be so ruin'd.

(*Enter* VENTIDIUS *above*)

Vent. Alone? And talking to himself? Concerned too?
Perhaps my guess is right; he lov'd her once,
And may pursue it still.

Dola. O friendship! Friendship!
Ill canst thou answer this; and reason, worse:
Unfaithful in th' attempt; hopeless to win;
And, if I win, undone: mere madness all.
And yet the occasion's fair. What injury
To him, to wear the robe which he throws by?

Vent. None, none at all. This happens as I wish,
To ruin her yet more with Antony.

(*Enter* CLEOPATRA, *talking with* ALEXAS; CHARMION, IRAS *on the other side*)

Dola. She comes! What charms have sorrow on that face!
Sorrow seems pleas'd to dwell with so much sweetness;
Yet, now and then, a melancholy smile
Breaks loose, like lightning in a winter's night,
And shows a moment's day.

Vent. If she should love him too! Her eunuch there?
That porcpisce[1] bodes ill weather. Draw, draw nearer,
Sweet devil, that I may hear.
Alex. Believe me; try
(DOLABELLA *goes over to* CHARMION *and* IRAS; *seems to talk with them*)
To make him jealous; jealousy is like
A polish'd glass held to the lips when life's in doubt;
If there be breath, 'twill catch the damp and show it.
Cleo. I grant you, jealousy's a proof of love,
But 'tis a weak and unavailing med'cine;
It puts out the disease, and makes it show,
But has no pow'r to cure.
Alex. 'Tis your last remedy, and strongest too:
And then this Dolabella, who so fit
To practise on? He's handsome, valiant, young,
And looks as he were laid for nature's bait,
To catch weak women's eyes.
He stands already more than half suspected
Of loving you: the least kind word or glance
You give this youth, will kindle him with love:
Then, like a burning vessel set adrift,
You'll send him down amain before the wind,
To fire the heart of jealous Antony.
Cleo. Can I do this? Ah, no; my love's so true,
That I can neither hide it where it is,
Nor show it where it is not. Nature meant me
A wife; a silly, harmless, household dove,
Fond without art, and kind without deceit;
But Fortune, that has made a mistress of me,
Has thrust me out to the wide world, unfurnish'd
Of falsehood to be happy.
Alex. Force yourself.
Th' event will be, your lover will return
Doubly desirous to possess the good
Which once he fear'd to lose.
Cleo. I must attempt it;
But oh, with what regret!
(*Exit* ALEXAS. *She comes up to* DOLABELLA)
Vent. So, now the scene draws near; they're in my reach.
Cleo. (*to* DOL.). Discoursing with my women! might not I
Share in your entertainment?
Char. You have been
The subject of it, madam.
Cleo. How! and how?
Iras. Such praises of your beauty!
Cleo. Mere poetry.
Your Roman wits, your Gallus and Tibullus,
Have taught you this from Cytheris and Delia.
Dola. Those Roman wits have never been in Egypt;
Cytheris and Delia else had been unsung:
I, who have seen, had I been born a poet,
Should choose a nobler name.
Cleo. You flatter me.
But, 'tis your nation's vice: all of your country
Are flatterers, and all false. Your friend's like you.
I'm sure he sent you not to speak these words.
Dola. No, madam; yet he sent me—
Cleo. Well, he sent you—
Dola. Of a less pleasing errand.
Cleo. How less pleasing?
Less to yourself, or me?
Dola. Madam, to both;
For you must mourn, and I must grieve to cause it.

[1] porpoise, i.e. Alexas. The porpoise was an omen of bad weather.

Cleo. You, Charmion, and your fellow,
stand at distance
(*Aside*) Hold up, my spirits.—Well, now
your mournful matter;
For I'm prepar'd, perhaps can guess it
too.
Dola. I wish you would; for 'tis a
thankless office,
To tell ill news: and I, of all your sex,
Most fear displeasing you.
Cleo. Of all your sex,
I soonest could forgive you, if you should.
Vent. Most delicate advances!
Women! women!
Dear, damn'd, inconstant sex!
Cleo. In the first place,
I am to be forsaken; is't not so?
Dola. I wish I could not answer to
that question.
Cleo. Then pass it o'er, because it
troubles you:
I should have been more griev'd another
time.
Next, I'm to lose my kingdom—Farewell,
Egypt!
Yet, is there any more?
Dola. Madam, I fear
Your too deep sense of grief has turn'd
your reason.
Cleo. No, no, I'm not run mad; I can
bear fortune:
And love may be expell'd by other love,
As poisons are by poisons.
Dola. You o'erjoy me, madam,
To find your griefs so moderately borne.
You've heard the worst; all are not false
like him.
Cleo. No; Heav'n forbid they should.
Dola. Some men are constant.
Cleo. And constancy deserves reward,
that's certain.
Dola. Deserves it not; but give it
leave to hope.
Vent. I'll swear thou hast my leave.
I have enough:
But how to manage this! Well, I'll consider. (*Exit*)
Dola. I came prepar'd
To tell you heavy news; news which, I
thought,
Would fright the blood from your pale
cheeks to hear;
But you have met it with a cheerfulness
That makes my task more easy; and my
tongue,
Which on another's message was employ'd,
Would gladly speak its own.
Cleo. Hold, Dolabella.
First tell me, were you chosen by my
lord?
Or sought you this employment?
Dola. He pick'd me out; and, as his
bosom friend,
He charg'd me with his words.
Cleo. The message then
I know was tender, and each accent
smooth,
To mollify that rugged word, *Depart*.
Dola. Oh, you mistake: he chose the
harshest words;
With fiery eyes, and with contracted
brows,
He coin'd his face in the severest stamp;
And fury shook his fabric like an earthquake;
He heav'd for vent, and burst like bellowing Ætna,
It sounds scarce human—"Hence, away
for ever:
Let her begone, the blot of my renown,
And bane of all my hopes!
(*All the time of this speech,* CLEOPATRA *seems more and more concern'd, till she sinks quite down*)
Let her be driv'n, as far as men can
think
From man's commerce! She'll poison to
the centre."
Cleo. Oh, I can bear no more!
Dola. Help, help! O wretch! O
cursed, cursed wretch!
What have I done!
Char. Help, chafe her temples, Iras.

Iras. Bend, bend her forward quickly.
Char. Heav'n be prais'd,
She comes again.
Cleo. Oh, let him not approach me.
Why have you brought me back to this loath'd being,
Th' abode of falsehood, violated vows,
And injur'd love? For pity, let me go;
For, if there be a place of long repose,
I'm sure I want it. My disdainful lord
Can never break that quiet; nor awake
The sleeping soul with hollowing in my tomb
Such words as fright her hence.—Unkind, unkind!
Dola. (*kneeling*) Believe me, 'tis against myself I speak;
That sure deserves belief; I injur'd him:
My friend ne'er spoke those words. Oh, had you seen
How often he came back, and every time
With something more obliging and more kind,
To add to what he said; what dear farewells;
How almost vanquisht by his love he parted,
And lean'd to what unwillingly he left!
I, traitor as I was, for love of you
(But what can you not do, who made me false!)
I forg'd that lie; for whose forgiveness kneels
This self-accus'd, self-punish'd criminal.
Cleo. With how much ease believe we what we wish!
Rise, Dolabella; if you have been guilty,
I have contributed, and too much love
Has made me guilty too.
Th' advance of kindness, which I made, was feign'd,
To call back fleeting love by jealousy;
But 'twould not last. Oh, rather let me lose,
Than so ignobly trifle with his heart.
Dola. I find your breast fenc'd round from human reach,
Transparent as a rock of solid crystal;
Seen through, but never pierc'd. My friend, my friend!
What endless treasure hast thou thrown away,
And scatter'd, like an infant, in the ocean,
Vain sums of wealth which none can gather thence!
Cleo. Could you not beg
An hour's admittance to his private ear?
Like one who wanders through long barren wilds
And yet foreknows no hospitable inn
Is near to succour hunger, eats his fill,
Before his painful march;
So would I feed a while my famish'd eyes
Before we part; for I have far to go,
If death be far, and never must return.
(VENTIDIUS *with* OCTAVIA, *behind*)
Vent. From hence you may discover—oh, sweet, sweet!
Would you indeed? The pretty hand in earnest?
Dola. I will, for this reward. (*Takes her hand*) Draw it not back.
'Tis all I e'er will beg.
Vent. They turn upon us.
Octav. What quick eyes has guilt!
Vent. Seem not to have observ'd 'em, and go on.
(*They enter*)
Dola. Saw you the emperor, Ventidius?
Vent. No.
I sought him; but I heard that he was private,
None with him but Hipparchus, his freedman.
Dola. Know you his bus'ness?
Vent. Giving him instructions,
And letters to his brother Cæsar.
Dola. Well,
He must be found.
(*Exeunt* DOLABELLA *and* CLEOPATRA)
Octav. Most glorious impudence!
Vent. She look'd, methought,
As she would say, "Take your old man, Octavia;

Thank you, I'm better here." Well, but what use
Make we of this discovery?
Octav. Let it die.
Vent. I pity Dolabella; but she's dangerous:
Her eyes have pow'r beyond Thessalian charms,
To draw the moon from Heav'n; for eloquence,
The sea-green Syrens taught her voice their flatt'ry;
And, while she speaks, night steals upon the day,
Unmark'd of those that hear: Then she's so charming,
Age buds at sight of her, and swells to youth:
The holy priests gaze on her when she smiles;
And with heav'd hands, forgetting gravity,
They bless her wanton eyes. Even I, who hate her,
With a malignant joy behold such beauty;
And, while I curse, desire it. Antony
Must needs have some remains of passion still,
Which may ferment into a worse relapse,
If now not fully cur'd. I know, this minute,
With Cæsar he's endeavoring her peace.
Octav. You have prevail'd:—but for a further purpose (*Walks off*)
I'll prove how he will relish this discovery.
What, make a strumpet's peace! it swells my heart:
It must not, sha' not be.
Vent. His guards appear.
Let me begin, and you shall second me.

(*Enter* ANTONY)

Ant. Octavia, I was looking you, my love:
What, are your letters ready? I have giv'n
My last instructions.
Octav. Mine, my lord, are written.
Ant. Ventidius. (*Drawing him aside*)
Vent. My lord?
Ant. A word in private.
When saw you Dolabella?
Vent. Now, my lord,
He parted hence; and Cleopatra with him.
Ant. Speak softly. 'Twas by my command he went,
To bear my last farewell.
Vent. (*aloud*) It looked indeed
Like your farewell.
Ant. More softly.—My farewell?
What secret meaning have you in those words
Of "my farewell?" He did it by my order.
Vent. (*aloud*) Then he obey'd your order. I suppose
You bid him do it with all gentleness,
All kindness, and all—love.
Ant. How she mourn'd,
The poor forsaken creature!
Vent. She took it as she ought; she bore your parting
As she did Cæsar's, as she would another's,
Were a new love to come.
Ant. (*aloud*) Thou dost belie her,
Most basely and maliciously belie her.
Vent. I thought not to displease you; I have done.
Octav. (*coming up*) You seem disturb'd, my lord.
Ant. A very trifle.
Retire, my love.
Vent. It was indeed a trifle.
He sent—
Ant. (*angrily*) No more. Look how thou disobey'st me;
Thy life shall answer it.
Octav. Then 'tis no trifle.
Vent. (*to* OCTAV.) 'Tis less; a very nothing: you too saw it,
As well as I, and therefore 'tis no secret

Ant. She saw it!
Vent. Yes: she saw young Dolabella—
Ant. Young Dolabella!
Vent. Young, I think him young,
And handsome too; and so do others think him.
But what of that? He went by your command,
Indeed 'tis probable, with some kind message;
For she receiv'd it graciously; she smil'd;
And then he grew familiar with her hand,
Squeez'd it, and worried it with ravenous kisses;
She blush'd, and sigh'd, and smil'd, and blush'd again;
At last she took occasion to talk softly,
And brought her cheek up close, and lean'd on his;
At which, he whisper'd kisses back on hers;
And then she cried aloud that constancy
Should be rewarded.
Octav. This I saw and heard.
Ant. What woman was it, whom you heard and saw
So playful with my friend?
Not Cleopatra?
Vent. Even she, my lord.
Ant. My Cleopatra?
Vent. Your Cleopatra;
Dolabella's Cleopatra; every man's Cleopatra.
Ant. Thou liest.
Vent. I do not lie, my lord.
Is this so strange? Should mistresses be left,
And not provide against a time of change?
You know she's not much us'd to lonely nights.
Ant. I'll think no more on't.
I know 'tis false, and see the plot betwixt you.
You needed not have gone this way, Octavia.
What harms it you that Cleopatra's just?
She's mine no more. I see, and I forgive:
Urge it no farther, love.
Octav. Are you concern'd,
That she's found false?
Ant. I should be, were it so;
For, though 'tis past, I would not that the world
Should tax my former choice, that I lov'd one
Of so light note; but I forgive you both.
Vent. What has my age deserv'd, that you should think
I would abuse your ears with perjury?
If Heav'n be true, she's false.
Ant. Though Heav'n and earth
Should witness it, I'll not believe her tainted.
Vent. I'll bring you then a witness
From Hell, to prove her so.—Nay, go not back;
(*Seeing* ALEXAS *just entering, and starting back*)
For stay you must and shall.
Alex. What means my lord?
Vent. To make you do what most you hate,—speak truth.
You are of Cleopatra's private counsel,
Of her bed-counsel, her lascivious hours;
Are conscious of each nightly change she makes,
And watch her, as Chaldæans do the moon,
Can tell what signs she passes through, what day.
Alex. My noble lord!
Vent. My most illustrious pander,
No fine set speech, no cadence, no turn'd periods,
But a plain homespun truth, is what I ask:
I did, myself, o'erhear your queen make love
To Dolabella. Speak; for I will know,
By your confession, what more passed betwixt 'em;

How near the bus'ness draws to your employment;
And when the happy hour.
Ant. Speak truth, Alexas, whether it offend
Or please Ventidius, care not: justify
Thy injur'd queen from malice: dare his worst.
Octav. (*aside*). See how he gives him courage! how he fears
To find her false! and shuts his eyes to truth,
Willing to be misled!
Alex. As far as love may plead for woman's frailty,
Urg'd by desert and greatness of the lover,
So far, divine Octavia, may my queen
Stand even excus'd to you for loving him
Who is your lord: so far, from brave Ventidius,
May her past actions hope a fair report.
Ant. 'Tis well, and truly spoken; mark, Ventidius.
Alex. To you, most noble emperor, her strong passion
Stands not excus'd, but wholly justified.
Her beauty's charms alone, without her crown,
From Ind and Meroe drew the distant vows
Of sighing kings; and at her feet were laid
The sceptres of the earth, expos'd on heaps,
To choose where she would reign:
She thought a Roman only could deserve her,
And, of all Romans, only Antony;
And, to be less than wife to you, disdain'd
Their lawful passion.
Ant. 'Tis but truth.
Alex. And yet, though love, and your unmatch'd desert,
Have drawn her from the due regard of honor,
At last Heav'n open'd her unwilling eyes
To see the wrongs she offer'd fair Octavia,
Whose holy bed she lawlessly usurpt.
The sad effects of this improsperous war
Confirm'd those pious thoughts.
Vent. (*aside*). Oh, wheel you there?
Observe him now; the man begins to mend,
And talk substantial reason.—Fear not, eunuch;
The emperor has giv'n thee leave to speak.
Alex. Else had I never dar'd t' offend his ears
With what the last necessity has urg'd
On my forsaken mistress; yet I must not
Presume to say her heart is wholly alter'd.
Ant. No, dare not for thy life, I charge thee dare not
Pronounce that fatal word!
Octav. (*aside*) Must I bear this? Good Heav'n, afford me patience.
Vent. On, sweet eunuch; my dear half-man, proceed.
Alex. Yet Dolabella
Has loved her long; he, next my god-like lord,
Deserves her best; and should she meet his passion,
Rejected, as she is, by him she lov'd——
Ant. Hence from my sight! for I can bear no more:
Let furies drag thee quick to Hell; let all
The longer damn'd have rest; each torturing hand
Do thou employ, till Cleopatra comes;
Then join thou too, and help to torture her!
(*Exit* ALEXAS, *thrust out by* ANTONY)
Octav. 'Tis not well,
Indeed, my lord, 'tis much unkind to me,
To show this passion, this extreme concernment,
For an abandon'd, faithless prostitute.
Ant. Octavia, leave me; I am much disorder'd:

Leave me, I say.
Octav. My lord!
Ant. I bid you leave me.
Vent. Obey him, madam: best withdraw a while,
And see how this will work.
Octav. Wherein have I offended you, my lord,
That I am bid to leave you? Am I false,
Or infamous? Am I a Cleopatra?
Were I she,
Base as she is, you would not bid me leave you;
But hang upon my neck, take slight excuses,
And fawn upon my falsehood.
Ant. 'Tis too much.
Too much, Octavia; I am prest with sorrows
Too heavy to be borne; and you add more:
I would retire, and recollect what's left
Of man within, to aid me.
Octav. You would mourn
In private for your love, who has betray'd you.
You did but half return to me: your kindness
Linger'd behind with her. I hear, my lord,
You make conditions for her,
And would include her treaty. Wondrous proofs
Of love to me!
Ant. Are you my friend, Ventidius?
Or are you turn'd a Dolabella too,
And let this fury loose?
Vent. Oh, be advis'd,
Sweet madam, and retire.
Octav. Yes, I will go; but never to return.
You shall no more be haunted with this Fury.
My lord, my lord, love will not always last,
When urg'd with long unkindness and disdain:
Take her again whom you prefer to me;
She stays but to be call'd. Poor cozen'd man!
Let a feign'd parting give her back your heart,
Which a feign'd love first got; for injur'd me,
Though my just sense of wrongs forbid my stay,
My duty shall be yours.
To the dear pledges of our former love
My tenderness and care shall be transferr'd,
And they shall cheer, by turns, my widow'd nights:
So, take my last farewell; for I despair
To have you whole, and scorn to take you half. (*Exit*)
Vent. I combat Heav'n, which blasts my best designs:
My last attempt must be to win her back;
But oh! I fear, in vain. (*Exit*)
Ant. Why was I fram'd with this plain, honest heart,
Which knows not to disguise its griefs and weakness,
But bears its workings outward to the world?
I should have kept the mighty anguish in,
And forc'd a smile at Cleopatra's falsehood:
Octavia had believ'd it, and had stayed.
But I am made a shallow-forded stream,
Seen to the bottom: all my clearness scorn'd,
And all my faults exposed.—See where he comes,

(*Enter* DOLABELLA)

Who has profan'd the sacred name of friend,
And worn it into vileness!
With how secure a brow, and specious form,
He gilds the secret villain! Sure that face

Was meant for honesty; but Heav'n mismatch'd it,
And furnish'd treason out with nature's pomp,
To make its work more easy.
Dola. O, my friend!
Ant. Well, Dolabella, you perform'd my message?
Dola. I did, unwillingly.
Ant. Unwillingly?
Was it so hard for you to bear our parting?
You should have wished it.
Dola. Why?
Ant. Because you love me.
And she receiv'd my message with as true,
With as unfeign'd, a sorrow as you brought it?
Dola. She loves you, ev'n to madness.
Ant. Oh, I know it.
You, Dolabella, do not better know
How much she loves me. And should I
Forsake this beauty, this all-perfect creature?
Dola. I could not, were she mine.
Ant. And yet you first
Persuaded me. How come you alter'd since?
Dola. I said at first I was not fit to go;
I could not hear her sighs, and see her tears,
But pity must prevail: and so, perhaps,
It may again with you; for I have promis'd,
That she should take her last farewell: and, see,
She comes to claim my word.

(*Enter* CLEOPATRA)

Ant. False Dolabella!
Dola. What's false, my lord?
Ant. Why, Dolabella's false,
And Cleopatra's false; both false and faithless.
Draw near, you well-join'd wickedness, you serpents,
Whom I have in my kindly bosom warm'd,
Till I am stung to death.
Dola. My lord, have I
Deserv'd to be thus us'd?
Cleo. Can Heav'n prepare
A newer torment? Can it find a curse
Beyond our separation?
Ant. Yes, if fate
Be just, much greater: Heaven should be ingenious
In punishing such crimes. The rolling stone [1]
And gnawing vulture were slight pains, invented
When Jove was young, and no examples known
Of mighty ills; but you have ripen'd sin,
To such a monstrous growth, 'twill pose the gods
To find an equal torture. Two, two such!—
Oh, there's no farther name,—two such! to me,
To me, who lock'd my soul within your breasts,
Had no desires, no joys, no life, but you;
When half the globe was mine, I gave it you
In dowry with my heart; I had no use,
No fruit of all, but you: a friend and mistress
Was what the world could give. O, Cleopatra!
O, Dolabella! How could you betray
This tender heart, which with an infant-fondness
Lay lull'd betwixt your bosoms, and there slept,
Secure of injur'd faith?
Dola. If she has wrong'd you,
Heav'n, Hell, and you revenge it.
Ant. If she wrong'd me!
Thou wouldst evade thy part of guilt; but swear
Thou lov'st not her.

[1] cylindrical stone used for crushing

Dola. Not so as I love you.
Ant. Not so? Swear, swear, I say, thou dost not love her.
Dola. No more than friendship will allow.
Ant. No more?
Friendship allows thee nothing: Thou art perjur'd—
And yet thou didst not swear thou lov'dst her not;
But not so much, no more. O trifling hypocrite,
Who dar'st not own to her, thou dost not love,
Nor own to me, thou dost! Ventidius heard it;
Octavia saw it.
Cleo. They are enemies.
Ant. Alexas is not so: He, he confessed it;
He, who, next Hell, best knew it, he avow'd it.
(*To* DOLABELLA) Why do I seek a proof beyond yourself?
You, whom I sent to bear my last farewell,
Return'd, to plead her stay.
Dola. What shall I answer?
If to have lov'd be guilt, then I have sinn'd;
But if to have repented of that love
Can wash away my crime, I have repented.
Yet, if I have offended past forgiveness,
Let not her suffer: she is innocent.
Cleo. Ah, what will not a woman do who loves?
What means will she refuse, to keep that heart,
Where all her joys are plac'd? 'Twas I encourag'd,
'Twas I blew up the fire that scorch'd his soul,
To make you jealous, and by that regain you.
But all in vain; I could not counterfeit:
In spite of all the dams, my love broke o'er
And drown'd my heart again: fate took th' occasion;
And thus one minute's feigning has destroy'd
My whole life's truth.
Ant. Thin cobweb arts of falsehood;
Seen, and broke through at first.
Dola. Forgive your mistress.
Cleo. Forgive your friend.
Ant. You have convinc'd yourselves.
You plead each other's cause: What witness have you,
That you but meant to raise my jealousy?
Cleo. Ourselves, and Heav'n.
Ant. Guilt witnesses for guilt. Hence, love and friendship!
You have no longer place in human breasts,
These two have driv'n you out: Avoid my sight!
I would not kill the man whom I have lov'd,
And cannot hurt the woman; but avoid me:
I do not know how long I can be tame;
For, if I stay one minute more, to think
How I am wrong'd, my justice and revenge
Will cry so loud within me that my pity
Will not be heard for either.
Dola. Heav'n has but
Our sorrow for our sins; and then delights
To pardon erring man: sweet mercy seems
Its darling attribute, which limits justice;
As if there were degrees in infinite,
And infinite would rather want perfection
Than punish to extent.
Ant. I can forgive
A foe; but not a mistress, and a friend.
Treason is there in its most horrid shape,
Where trust is greatest; and the soul resign'd,

Is stabb'd by its own guards: I'll hear no more;
Hence from my sight for ever!
Cleo. How? For ever!
I cannot go one moment from your sight,
And must I go for ever?
My joys, my only joys, are centr'd here:
What place have I to go to? My own kingdom?
That I have lost for you: Or to the Romans?
They hate me for your sake: Or must I wander
The wide world o'er, a helpless, banish'd woman,
Banish'd for love of you; banish'd from you?
Ay, there's the banishment! Oh, hear me; hear me,
With strictest justice: For I beg no favor;
And if I have offended you, then kill me,
But do not banish me.
Ant. I must not hear you.
I have a fool within me takes your part;
But honor stops my ears.
Cleo. For pity hear me!
Would you cast off a slave who follow'd you?
Who crouch'd beneath your spurn?—He has no pity!
See, if he gives one tear to my departure;
One look, one kind farewell: O iron heart!
Let all the gods look down, and judge betwixt us,
If he did ever love!
Ant. No more. Alexas!
Dola. A perjur'd villain!
Ant. (*to* CLEO.) Your Alexas; yours.
Cleo. Oh, 'twas his plot; his ruinous design,
T' engage you in my love by jealousy.
Hear him; confront him with me; let him speak.
Ant. I have; I have.
Cleo. And if he clear me not—
Ant. Your creature! one who hangs upon your smiles!
Watches your eye to say or to unsay,
Whate'er you please! I am not to be mov'd.
Cleo. Then must we part? Farewell, my cruel lord!
Th' appearance is against me; and I go,
Unjustified, for ever from your sight.
How I have lov'd, you know; how yet I love,
My only comfort is, I know myself:
I love you more, ev'n now you are unkind,
Than when you lov'd me most; so well, so truly
I'll never strive against it; but die pleas'd,
To think you once were mine.
Ant. Good Heav'n, they weep at parting!
Must I weep too? That calls 'em innocent.
I must not weep; and yet I must, to think
That I must not forgive.——
Live, but live wretched; 'tis just you should,
Who made me so: Live from each other's sight:
Let me not hear you meet. Set all the earth,
And all the seas betwixt your sunder'd loves:
View nothing common but the sun and skies.
Now, all take several ways;
And each your own sad fate with mine deplore;
That you were false, and I could trust no more. (*Exeunt severally*)

ACT V

SCENE I

(*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS)

Char. Be juster, Heav'n; such virtue punish'd thus,

Will make us think that chance rules all above,
And shuffles with a random hand the lots
Which man is forc'd to draw.
Cleo. I could tear out these eyes, that gain'd his heart,
And had not power to keep it. Oh the curse
Of doting on, ev'n when I find it dotage!
Bear witness, gods, you heard him bid me go;
You, whom he mock'd with imprecating vows
Of promis'd faith!—I'll die; I will not bear it.
(*She pulls out her dagger, and they hold her*)
You may hold me——
But I can keep my breath; I can die inward,
And choke this love.

(*Enter* ALEXAS)

Iras. Help, O Alexas, help!
The queen grows desperate; her soul struggles in her
With all the agonies of love and rage,
And strives to force its passage.
Cleo. Let me go.
Art thou there, traitor!—O,
O for a little breath, to vent my rage!
Give, give me way, and let me loose upon him.
Alex. Yes, I deserve it, for my ill-tim'd truth.
Was it for me to prop
The ruins of a falling majesty?
To place myself beneath the mighty flaw,[1]
Thus to be crush'd, and pounded into atoms,
By its o'erwhelming weight? 'Tis too presuming
For subjects to preserve that wilful pow'r,
Which courts its own destruction.
Cleo. I would reason
More calmly with you. Did not you o'errule,
And force my plain, direct, and open love,
Into these crooked paths of jealousy?
Now, what's th' event? Octavia is remov'd;
But Cleopatra's banish'd. Thou, thou villain,
Hast push'd my boat to open sea; to prove,
At my sad cost, if thou canst steer it back.
It cannot be; I'm lost too far; I'm ruin'd:
Hence, thou impostor, traitor, monster, devil!—
I can no more: thou, and my griefs, have sunk
Me down so low, that I want voice to curse thee.
Alex. Suppose some shipwreck'd seaman near the shore,
Dropping and faint with climbing up the cliff,
If, from above, some charitable hand
Pull him to safety, hazarding himself
To draw the other's weight; would he look back,
And curse him for his pains? The case is yours;
But one step more, and you have gain'd the height.
Cleo. Sunk, never more to rise.
Alex. Octavia's gone, and Dolabella banish'd.
Believe me, madam, Antony is yours.
His heart was never lost, but started off
To jealousy, love's last retreat and covert,
Where it lies hid in shades, watchful in silence,
And list'ning for the sound that calls it back.
Some other, any man ('tis so advanc'd),
May perfect this unfinish'd work, which I
(Unhappy only to myself) have left
So easy to his hand.
Cleo. Look well thou do't; else—

[1] breach, crack

Alex. Else, what your silence threatens.—Antony
Is mounted up the Pharos; from whose turret
He stands surveying our Egyptian galleys,
Engag'd with Cæsar's fleet. Now death or conquest!
If the first happen, fate acquits my promise;
If we o'ercome, the conqueror is yours.
(*A distant shout within*)
Char. Have comfort, madam: did you mark that shout?
(*Second shout nearer*)
Iras. Hark! They redouble it.
Alex. 'Tis from the port.
The loudness shows it near. Good news, kind heavens!
Cleo. Osiris make it so!

(*Enter* SERAPION)

Serap. Where, where's the queen?
Alex. How frightfully the holy coward stares,
As if not yet recover'd of th' assault,
When all his gods, and, what's more dear to him,
His offerings were at stake.
Serap. O horror, horror!
Egypt has been; our latest hour has come:
The queen of nations, from her ancient seat,
Is sunk for ever in the dark abyss:
Time has unroll'd her glories to the last
And now clos'd up the volume.
Cleo. Be more plain:
Say whence thou com'st; though fate is in thy face,
Which from thy haggard eyes looks wildly out,
And threatens ere thou speak'st.
Serap. I came from Pharos;
From viewing (spare me and imagine it)
Our land's last hope, your navy—
Cleo. Vanquish'd?
Serap. No.
They fought not.
Cleo. Then they fled.
Serap. Nor that. I saw,
With Antony, your well-appointed fleet
Row out; and thrice he wav'd his hand on high,
And thrice with cheerful cries they shouted back:
'Twas then false Fortune, like a fawning strumpet,
About to leave the bankrupt prodigal,
With a dissembled smile would kiss at parting,
And flatter to the last; the well-tim'd oars,
Now dipt from every bank, now smoothly run
To meet the foe; and soon indeed they met,
But not as foes. In few, we saw their caps
On either side thrown up; th' Egyptian galleys,
Receiv'd like friends, passed through, and fell behind
The Roman rear: And now, they all come forward,
And ride within the port.
Cleo. Enough, Serapion:
I've heard my doom. This needed not, you gods:
When I lost Antony, your work was done;
'Tis but superfluous malice.—Where's my lord?
How bears he this last blow?
Serap. His fury cannot be express'd by words:
Thrice he attempted headlong to have fall'n
Full on his foes, and aim'd at Cæsar's galley:
Withheld, he raves on you; cries he's betray'd.
Should he now find you——
Alex. Shun him; seek your safety,
Till you can clear your innocence.
Cleo. I'll stay.

Alex. You must not; haste you to your monument,
While I make speed to Cæsar.
Cleo. Cæsar! No,
I have no business with him.
Alex. I can work him
To spare your life, and let this madman perish.
Cleo. Base fawning wretch! wouldst thou betray him too?
Hence from my sight! I will not hear a traitor;
'Twas thy design brought all this ruin on us.
Serapion, thou art honest; counsel me:
But haste, each moment's precious.
Serap. Retire; you must not yet see Antony.
He who began this mischief,
'Tis just he tempt the danger; let him clear you:
And, since he offer'd you his servile tongue,
To gain a poor, precarious life from Cæsar,
Let him expose that fawning eloquence,
And speak to Antony.
Alex. O heavens! I dare not;
I meet my certain death.
Cleo. Slave, thou deserv'st it.—
Not that I fear my lord, will I avoid him;
I know him noble: when he banish'd me,
And thought me false, he scorn'd to take my life;
But I'll be justified, and then die with him.
Alex. O pity me, and let me follow you.
Cleo. To death, if thou stir hence. Speak, if thou canst,
Now for thy life, which basely thou wouldst save;
While mine I prize at—this! Come, good Serapion.
(*Exeunt* CLEOPATRA, SERAPION, CHARMION, *and* IRAS)
Alex. O that I less could fear to lose this being,
Which, like a snowball in my coward hand,
The more 'tis grasped, the faster melts away.
Poor reason! what a wretched aid art thou!
For still, in spite of thee,
These two long lovers, soul and body, dread
Their final separation. Let me think:
What can I say, to save myself from death?
No matter what becomes of Cleopatra.
Ant. (*Within*) Which way? Where?
Vent. (*Within*) This leads to th' monument.
Alex. Ah me! I hear him; yet I'm unprepar'd:
My gift of lying's gone;
And this court-devil, which I so oft have rais'd,
Forsakes me at my need. I dare not stay;
Yet cannot far go hence. (*Exit*)

(*Enter* ANTONY *and* VENTIDIUS)

Ant. O happy Cæsar! Thou hast men to lead:
Think not 'tis thou hast conquer'd Antony;
But Rome has conquer'd Egypt. I'm betray'd.
Vent. Curse on this treach'rous train!
Their soil and Heav'n infect 'em all with baseness:
And their young souls come tainted to the world
With the first breath they draw.
Ant. Th' original villain sure no god created;
He was a bastard of the sun, by Nile,
Ap'd into man; with all his mother's mud
Crusted about his soul.
Vent. The nation is
One universal traitor; and their queen
The very spirit and extract of 'em all.

Ant. Is there yet left
A possibility of aid from valor?
Is there one god unsworn to my destruction?
The least unmortgag'd hope? for, if there be,
Methinks I cannot fall beneath the fate
Of such a boy as Cæsar.
The world's one half is yet in Antony;
And from each limb of it that's hew'd away
The soul comes back to me.
Vent. There yet remain
Three legions in the town. The last assault
Lopt off the rest; if death be your design,—
As I must wish it now,—these are sufficient
To make a heap about us of dead foes,
An honest pile for burial.
Ant. They're enough.
We'll not divide our stars; but side by side
Fight emulous, and with malicious eyes
Survey each other's acts: so every death
Thou giv'st, I'll take on me, as a just debt,
And pay thee back a soul.
Vent. Now you shall see I love you. Not a word
Of chiding more. By my few hours of life,
I am so pleas'd with this brave Roman fate,
That I would not be Cæsar, to outlive you.
When we put off this flesh, and mount together,
I shall be shown to all th' ethereal crowd,—
Lo, this is he who died with Antony!
Ant. Who knows but we may pierce through all their troops,
And reach my veterans yet? 'Tis worth the tempting,
T' o'erleap this gulf of fate,
And leave our wand'ring destinies behind.

(*Enter* ALEXAS, *trembling*)

Vent. See, see, that villain!
See Cleopatra stampt upon that face,
With all her cunning, all her arts of falsehood!
How she looks out through those dissembling eyes!
How he has set his count'nance for deceit,
And promises a lie before he speaks!
Let me dispatch him first. (*Drawing*)
Alex. O spare me, spare me!
Ant. Hold; he's not worth your killing.—On thy life,
(Which thou may'st keep, because I scorn to take it)
No syllable to justify thy queen;
Save thy base tongue its office.
Alex. Sir, she's gone,
Where she shall never be molested more
By love, or you.
Ant. Fled to her Dolabella!
Die, traitor! I revoke my promise! Die! (*Going to kill him*)
Alex. O hold! She is not fled.
Ant. She is: my eyes
Are open to her falsehood; my whole life
Has been a golden dream of love and friendship;
But, now I wake, I'm like a merchant, rous'd
From soft repose, to see his vessel sinking,
And all his wealth cast o'er. Ungrateful woman!
Who follow'd me, but as the swallow summer,
Hatching her young ones in my kindly beams,
Singing her flatt'ries to my morning wake:
But, now my winter comes, she spreads her wings,
And seeks the spring of Cæsar.
Alex. Think not so:
Her fortunes have in all things mixt with yours.
Had she betray'd her naval force to Rome,

How easily might she have gone to Cæsar,
Secure by such a bribe!
Vent. She sent it first,
To be more welcome after.
Ant. 'Tis too plain;
Else would she have appeared, to clear herself.
Alex. Too fatally she has: she could not bear
To be accus'd by you; but shut herself
Within her monument; look'd down and sigh'd,
While, from her unchang'd face, the silent tears
Dropt, as they had not leave, but stole their parting.
Some undistinguish'd words she inly murmur'd;
At last she rais'd her eyes; and, with such looks
As dying Lucrece cast—
Ant. My heart forebodes—
Vent. All for the best.—Go on.
Alex. She snatch'd her poniard,
And ere we could prevent the fatal blow,
Plung'd it within her breast; then turn'd to me:
"Go, bear my lord (said she) my last farewell;
And ask him, if he yet suspect my faith."
More she was saying, but death rush'd betwixt.
She half pronounc'd your name with her last breath,
And buried half within her.
Vent. Heav'n be prais'd!
Ant. Then art thou innocent, my poor dear love?
And art thou dead?
O those two words! Their sound should be divided.
Hadst thou been false, and died; or hadst thou liv'd,
And hadst been true—But innocence and death!
This shows not well above. Then what am I,
The murderer of this truth, this innocence!
Thoughts cannot form themselves in words so horrid
As can express my guilt!
Vent. Is't come to this? The gods have been too gracious;
And thus you thank 'em for 't!
Ant. (*to* ALEX.) Why stay'st thou here?
Is it for thee to spy upon my soul,
And see its inward mourning? Get thee hence;
Thou art not worthy to behold what now
Becomes a Roman emperor to perform.
Alex. (*aside*) He loves her still:
His grief betrays it. Good! The joy to find
She's yet alive completes the reconcilement.
I've sav'd myself and her. But, oh! the Romans!
Fate comes too fast upon my wit,
Hunts me too hard, and meets me at each double. (*Exit*)
Vent. Would she had died a little sooner, though!
Before Octavia went; you might have treated;
Now 'twill look tame, and would not be receiv'd.
Come, rouse yourself, and let's die warm together.
Ant. I will not fight: there's no more work for war.
The bus'ness of my angry hours is done.
Vent. Cæsar is at your gates.
Ant. Why, let him enter;
He's welcome now.
Vent. What lethargy has crept into your soul?
Ant. 'Tis but a scorn of life, and just desire
To free myself from bondage.
Vent. Do it bravely.

Ant. I will; but not by fighting. O Ventidius!
What should I fight for now?—my queen is dead.
I was but great for her; my pow'r, my empire
Were but my merchandise to buy her love;
And conquer'd kings, my factors. Now she's dead,
Let Cæsar take the world,—
An empty circle, since the jewel's gone
Which made it worth my strife: my being's nauseous;
For all the bribes of life are gone away.
Vent. Would you be taken?
Ant. Yes, I would be taken;
But, as a Roman ought,—dead, by Ventidius:
For I'll convey my soul from Cæsar's reach,
And lay down life myself. 'Tis time the world
Should have a lord, and know whom to obey.
We two have kept its homage in suspense,
And bent the globe, on whose each side we trod,
Till it was dented inwards. Let him walk
Alone upon't: I'm weary of my part.
My torch is out; and the world stands before me
Like a black desert at th' approach of night:
I'll lay me down, and stray no farther on.
Vent. I could be griev'd,
But that I'll not outlive you: choose your death;
For I have seen him in such various shapes,
I care not which I take: I'm only troubled,
The life I bear is worn to such a rag,
'Tis scarce worth giving. I could wish indeed
We threw it from us with a better grace;
That, like two lions taken in the toils,
We might at least thrust out our paws, and wound
The hunters that inclose us.
Ant. I have thought on 't.
Ventidius, you must live.
Vent. I must not, sir.
Ant. Wilt thou not live, to speak some good of me?
To stand by my fair fame, and guard th' approaches
From the ill tongues of men?
Vent. Who shall guard mine,
For living after you?
Ant. Say I command it.
Vent. If we die well, our deaths will speak themselves
And need no living witness.
Ant. Thou hast lov'd me,
And fain I would reward thee. I must die;
Kill me, and take the merit of my death,
To make thee friends with Cæsar.
Vent. Thank your kindness.
You said I lov'd you; and in recompense
You bid me turn a traitor. Did I think
You would have us'd me thus?—that I should die
With a hard thought of you?
Ant. Forgive me, Roman.
Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,
My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thoughts break all at random out.
I've thought better; do not deny me twice.
Vent. By Heav'n, I will not.
Let it not be t' outlive you.
Ant. Kill me first,
And then die thou; for 'tis but just thou serve
Thy friend before thyself.
Vent. Give me your hand.
We soon shall meet again. Now, farewell, emperor! (*Embrace*)
Methinks that word's too cold to be my last:

Since death sweeps all distinctions, farewell, friend!
That's all.—
I will not make a bus'ness of a trifle;
And yet I cannot look on you, and kill you;
Pray turn your face.
Ant. I do: strike home, be sure.
Vent. Home as my sword will reach.
(*Kills himself*)
Ant. Oh, thou mistak'st;
That wound was not of thine; give it me back:
Thou robb'st me of my death.
Vent. I do indeed;
But think 'tis the first time I e'er deceiv'd you,
If that may plead my pardon.—And you, gods,
Forgive me, if you will; for I die perjur'd,
Rather than kill my friend. (*Dies*)
Ant. Farewell! Ever my leader, ev'n in death!
My queen and thou have got the start of me,
And I'm the lag of honor.—Gone so soon?
Is Death no more? He us'd him carelessly,
With a familiar kindness: ere he knock'd,
Ran to the door, and took him in his arms,
As who should say—"Y'are welcome at all hours;
A friend need give no warning." Books had spoil'd him;
For all the learn'd are cowards by profession.
'Tis not worth
My farther thought; for death, for aught I know,
Is but to think no more. Here's to be satisfied. (*Falls on his sword*)
I've missed my heart. O unperforming hand!
Thou never couldst have err'd in a worse time.
My fortune jades me to the last; and death,
Like a great man, takes state, and makes me wait
For my admittance.—
(*Trampling within*)
Some, perhaps, from Cæsar:
If he should find me living, and suspect
That I played booty with my life! I'll mend
My work, ere they can reach me.
(*Rises upon his knees*)

(*Enter* CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS)

Cleo. Where is my lord? Where is he?
Char. There he lies,
And dead Ventidius by him.
Cleo. My fears were prophets; I am come too late.
O that accurs'd Alexas!
(*Runs to him*)
Ant. Art thou living?
Or am I dead before I knew, and thou
The first kind ghost that meets me?
Cleo. Help me seat him.
Send quickly, send for help!
(*They place him in a chair*)
Ant. I am answer'd.
We live both. Sit thee down, my Cleopatra:
I'll make the most I can of life, to stay
A moment more with thee.
Cleo. How is it with you?
Ant. 'Tis as with a man
Removing in a hurry; all pack'd up,
But one dear jewel that his haste forgot;
And he, for that, returns upon the spur:
So I come back for thee.
Cleo. Too long, ye heav'ns you have been cruel to me:
Now show your mended faith, and give me back
His fleeting life!
Ant. It will not be, my love;
I keep my soul by force.
Say but thou art not false.
Cleo. 'Tis now too late

To say I'm true: I'll prove it, and die with you.
Unknown to me, Alexas feign'd my death:
Which, when I knew, I hasted to prevent
This fatal consequence. My fleet betray'd
Both you and me.
Ant. And Dolabella—
Cleo. Scarce
Esteem'd before he lov'd; but hated now.
Ant. Enough: my life's not long enough for more.
Thou say'st thou wilt come after: I believe thee;
For I can now believe whate'er thou sayest,
That we may part more kindly.
Cleo. I will come:
Doubt not, my life, I'll come, and quickly too:
Cæsar shall triumph o'er no part of thee.
Ant. But grieve not, while thou stay'st,
My last disastrous times:
Think we have had a clear and glorious day,
And Heav'n did kindly to delay the storm,
Just till our close of ev'ning. Ten years' love,
And not a moment lost, but all improv'd
To th' utmost joys,—what ages have we liv'd?
And now to die each other's; and, so dying,
While hand in hand we walk in groves below,
Whole troops of lovers' ghosts shall flock about us,
And all the train be ours.
Cleo. Your words are like the notes of dying swans,
Too sweet to last. Were there so many hours
For your unkindness, and not one for love?
Ant. No, not a minute.—This one kiss—more worth
Than all I leave to Cæsar. (*Dies*)
Cleo. O, tell me so again,
And take ten thousand kisses for that word.
My lord, my lord! Speak, if you yet have being;
Sign to me, if you cannot speak; or cast
One look! Do anything that shows you live.
Iras. He's gone too far to hear you;
And this you see, a lump of senseless clay,
The leavings of a soul.
Char. Remember, madam,
He charg'd you not to grieve.
Cleo. And I'll obey him.
I have not lov'd a Roman, not to know
What should become his wife; his wife, my Charmion!
For 'tis to that high title I aspire,
And now I'll not die less. Let dull Octavia
Survive, to mourn him dead. My nobler fate
Shall knit our spousals with a tie too strong
For Roman laws to break.
Iras. Will you then die?
Cleo. Why shouldst thou make that question?
Iras. Cæsar is merciful.
Cleo. Let him be so
To those that want his mercy: my poor lord
Made no such cov'nant with him, to spare me
When he was dead. Yield me to Cæsar's pride?
What! To be led in triumph through the streets,
A spectacle to base plebeian eyes;
While some dejected friend of Antony's
Close in a corner, shakes his head, and mutters
A secret curse on her who ruin'd him!
I'll none of that.

Char. Whatever you resolve,
I'll follow, ev'n to death.
Iras. I only fear'd
For you; but more should fear to live without you.
Cleo. Why, now 'tis as it should be. Quick, my friends,
Despatch; ere this, the town's in Cæsar's hands:
My lord looks down concern'd, and fears my stay,
Lest I should be surpris'd;
Keep him not waiting for his love too long.
You, Charmion, bring my crown and richest jewels,
With 'em, the wreath of victory I made
(Vain augury!) for him, who now lies dead:
You, Iras, bring the cure of all our ills.
Iras. The aspics, madam?
Cleo. Must I bid you twice?
(*Exit* CHARMION *and* IRAS)
'Tis sweet to die, when they would force life on me,
To rush into the dark abode of death,
And seize him first; if he be like my love,
He is not frightful, sure.
We're now alone, in secrecy and silence;
And is not this like lovers? I may kiss
These pale, cold lips; Octavia does not see me;
And, oh! 'tis better far to have him thus,
Than see him in her arms.—Oh, welcome, welcome!

(*Enter* CHARMION *and* IRAS)

Char. What must be done?
Cleo. Short ceremony, friends;
But yet it must be decent. First, this laurel
Shall crown my hero's head: he fell not basely,
Nor left his shield behind him.—Only thou
Couldst triumph o'er thyself; and thou alone
Wert worthy so to triumph.
Char. To what end
These ensigns of your pomp and royalty?
Cleo. Dull, that thou art! why, tis to meet my love;
As when I saw him first, on Cydnus' bank,
All sparkling, like a goddess: so adorn'd,
I'll find him once again; my second spousals
Shall match my first in glory. Haste, haste, both,
And dress the bride of Antony.
Char. 'Tis done.
Cleo. Now seat me by my lord. I claim this place;
For I must conquer Cæsar too, like him,
And win my share o' th' world.—Hail, you dear relics
Of my immortal love!
O let no impious hand remove you hence,
But rest for ever here! Let Egypt give
His death that peace, which it denied his life.
Reach me the casket.
Iras. Underneath the fruit
The aspic lies.
Cleo. (*Putting aside the leaves*) Welcome, thou kind deceiver!
Thou best of thieves; who, with an easy key,
Dost open life, and, unperceiv'd by us,
Ev'n steal us from ourselves; discharging so
Death's dreadful office better than himself;
Touching our limbs so gently into slumber,
That Death stands by, deceiv'd by his own image,
And thinks himself but sleep.
Serap. (*within*) The queen, where is she?
The town is yielded; Cæsar's at the gates.
Cleo. He comes too late t' invade the rights of death.
Haste, bare my arm, and rouse the serpent's fury.

(*Holds out her arm, and draws it back*)
Coward flesh,
Wouldst thou conspire with Cæsar to betray me,
As thou wert none of mine? I'll force thee to 't,
And not be sent by him,
But bring, myself, my soul to Antony.
(*Turns aside, and then shows her arm bloody*)
Take hence; the work is done.
Serap. (*within*) Break ope the door,
And guard the traitor well.
Char. The next is ours.
Iras. Now, Charmion, to be worthy
Of our great queen and mistress.
(*They apply the aspics*)
Cleo. Already, death, I feel thee in my veins:
I go with such a will to find my lord,
That we shall quickly meet.
A heavy numbness creeps through every limb,
And now 'tis at my head: my eyelids fall,
And my dear love is vanquish'd in a mist.
Where shall I find him, where? O turn me to him,
And lay me on his breast!—Cæsar, thy worst;
Now part us, if thou canst. (*Dies*)
(IRAS *sinks down at her feet, and dies;* CHARMION *stands behind her chair, as dressing her head*)

(*Enter* SERAPION, *two Priests,* ALEXAS *bound, Egyptians*)

Priest. Behold, Serapion, what havoc death has made!
Serap. 'Twas what I fear'd.
Charmion, is this well done?
Char. Yes, 'tis well done, and like a queen, the last
Of her great race: I follow her.
(*Sinks down: dies*)
Alex. 'Tis true,
She has done well. Much better thus to die,
Than live to make a holiday in Rome.
Serap. See how the lovers sit in state together,
As they were giving laws to half mankind!
Th' impression of a smile, left in her face,
Shows she died pleas'd with him for whom she liv'd,
And went to charm him in another world.
Cæsar's just entering: grief has now no leisure.
Secure that villain, as our pledge of safety,
To grace th' imperial triumph.—Sleep, blest pair,
Secure from human chance, long ages out,
While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb;
And fame to late posterity shall tell,
No lovers liv'd so great, or died so well.
(*Exeunt*)

EPILOGUE

Poets, like disputants, when reasons fail,
Have one sure refuge left—and that's to rail.
Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thunder'd through the pit;
And this is all their equipage of wit.
We wonder how the devil this diff'rence grows,
Betwixt our fools in verse, and yours in prose!
For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly understood,
'Tis civil war with their own flesh and blood.
The threadbare author hates the gaudy coat;
And swears at the gilt coach, but swears afoot:
For 'tis observ'd of every scribbling man,
He grows a fop as fast as e'er he can;
Prunes up, and asks his oracle, the glass,
If pink or purple best become his face.

For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays;
Nor likes your wit just as you like his plays;
He has not yet so much of Mr. Bayes.
He does his best; and if he cannot please,
Would quietly sue out his *writ of ease*.
Yet, if he might his own grand jury call,
By the fair sex he begs to stand or fall.
Let Cæsar's pow'r the men's ambition move,
But grace you him who lost the world for love!

Yet if some antiquated lady say,
The last age is not copied in his play;
Heav'n help the man who for that face must drudge,
Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
Let not the young and beauteous join with those;
For should you raise such numerous hosts of foes,
Young wits and sparks he to his aid must call;
'Tis more than one man's work to please you all.

FORMS IN THE HEROIC COUPLET: POPE

MOCK EPIC: VERSE ESSAY: RIMED EPISTLE

THE characteristic verse form of the eighteenth century is the heroic couplet. This is a rather rigid metre in which each line contains just ten syllables, broken by a pause in the middle (generally after the fourth syllable). The lines are united in pairs by end rime, and each couplet, so far as possible, expresses a complete idea. The form lends itself admirably to the use of antithesis and requires epigrammatic terseness. All sorts of things were written in this verse, including many that we should put in prose. The three types here represented are the mock epic, the verse essay, and the rimed epistle.

The mock epic makes use of exaggerated epic devices, with humorous intent, in the treatment of a trivial subject. The incident which furnished the suggestion for the *Rape of the Lock* (1712; enlarged 1714), was the affront which one Lord Petre gave a famous beauty, Miss Arabella Fermor, by snipping from her head a lock of hair. The theft resulted in an estrangement between the two young people, and a friend of both suggested that Pope should write a playful skit on the subject as a means of reconciling them. The lady at first was more annoyed than conciliated by this attempt, but Pope later revised his poem, adding largely to the fairy elements, and produced a truly delightful bit of verse.

The *Essay on Criticism* (1711) is valuable as a summary of the classical ideal in literature that prevailed in Pope's day. The professed aim of the age was to "follow the ancients," although their critical standards were chiefly known at second hand. Vida and Boileau had written treatises similar to Pope's and had found their inspiration chiefly in Horace's *Art of Poetry*. Pope was indebted to them all. From them he adopted what he found to his taste, adding certain observations of his own in keeping with what he borrowed. Pope lacked the broad acquaintance with literature on which any universal literary creed must be formulated. But the *Essay on Criticism* with all its arbitrary and conventional views is so completely in keeping with the spirit of the time, and so fully and so skilfully expresses the critical ideals of the day, that it is a document of genuine importance.

The *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735), later called the *Prologue to the Satires*, is the most autobiographical of Pope's several rimed epistles. Pope had been subjected to numerous attacks, public and private, and he took occasion in this poem to defend himself, assert his independence of court and patron, and justify his general position. The self-righteousness of his attitude is characteristic.

Alexander Pope was the dominating figure in English poetry during most of his life. He suffered from ill health and deformity, and his disposition was not pleasant.

But in an age when perfection of form was admired more than originality of matter or poetic inspiration he won a wide reputation. Among his other poems are *Windsor Forest,* the *Essay on Man* (a philosophical poem), and *The Dunciad,* an attack on various persons for literary and personal grudges. He also translated Homer and edited Shakespeare.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688–1744)

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM.

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.[1]
MARTIAL.

TO MRS. ARABELLA FERMOR.

MADAM,

It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to You. Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young Ladies, who have good sense and good humor enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a Secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a Bookseller, you had the good-nature, for my sake, to consent to the publication of one more correct: This I was forced to, before I had executed half my design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the Critics to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Demons are made to act in a Poem: for the ancient Poets are in one respect like many modern Ladies: let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These Machines I determined to raise, on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a Lady; but 'tis so much the concern of a Poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms.

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book, called *Le Comte de Gabalis,* which both in its title and size is so like a Novel that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these Gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes or Demons of Earth delight in mischief; but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the Air, are the best conditioned Creatures imaginable. For they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true Adepts, an inviolate preservation of Chastity.

As to the following Cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the end; (except the loss of your Hair, which I always mention with reverence). The Human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now manag'd, resembles you in nothing but in Beauty.

If this Poem had as many Graces as there are in your Person or in your Mind, yet I could never hope it should pass

[1] I did not wish, Belinda, to harm thy locks, but I am glad to have granted this to thy prayers. (Quoted with change of name from Martial, *Epigrams,* XII, 84)

through the world half so Uncensur'd as You have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, Madam.

Your most obedient, Humble Servant,

A. POPE.

CANTO I

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing— This verse to C[aryl]l,[1] Muse! is due:
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?
Sol thro' white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day;
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake;
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knock'd the ground,
And the press'd watch return'd a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian SYLPH prolong'd the balmy rest:
'T was he had summon'd to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hover'd o'er her head;
A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau,
(That ev'n in slumber caus'd her cheek to glow)
Seem'd to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seem'd to say:
"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguish'd care
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!
If e'er one vision touch'd thy infant thought,
Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught—
Of airy Elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by Angel-pow'rs,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flow'rs—
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learned pride conceal'd,
To Maids alone and Children are reveal'd.
What tho' no credit doubting Wits may give?
The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
Know, then, unnumber'd Spirits round thee fly,
The light Militia of the lower sky:
These, tho' unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the Box, and hover round the Ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in Air,
And view with scorn two Pages and a Chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once enclos'd in Woman's beauteous mould;

[1] John Caryll, a friend of Pope's, at whose suggestion he wrote the poem.

Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly Vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when Woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And tho' she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre,[1] after death survive.
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first Elements their Souls retire.
The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to Water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental Tea.
The graver Prude sinks downward to a Gnome,
In search of mischief still on Earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of Air.
"Know further yet: whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embrac'd;
For Spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting Maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Tho' Honor is the word with Men below.

"Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestin'd to the Gnomes' embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdain'd, and love deny'd;
Then gay Ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While Peers, and Dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And Garters, Stars, and Coronets appear,
And in soft sounds, 'Your Grace' salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young Coquettes to roll,
Teach Infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a Beau.
"Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The Sylphs thro' mystic mazes guide their way,
Thro' all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals Levity may call;
Oh blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.
"Of these am I, who thy protection claim.

[1] a game of cards

A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I rang'd the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear Mirror of thy ruling Star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,
Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warn'd by the Sylph, oh pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!"
He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leap'd up, and wak'd his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
Thy eyes first open'd on a Billet-doux;
Wounds, Charms, and Ardors were no no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanish'd from thy head.
And now, unveil'd, the Toilet stands display'd,
Each silver Vase in mystic order laid.
First, rob'd in white, the Nymph intent adores,
With head uncover'd, the Cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears;
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears.
Th' inferior Priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumber'd treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transform'd to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
Now awful Beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's prais'd for labors not her own.

CANTO II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The Sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launch'd on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair Nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone,
But ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling Cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those:
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.

Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide;
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
This Nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' advent'rous Baron the bright locks admir'd;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a Lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attain'd his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly Love—to Love an Altar built
Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender Billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r;
The rest, the winds dispers'd in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And soften'd sounds along the waters die.
Smooth flow the waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smil'd, and all the world was gay.
All but the Sylph—with careful thoughts opprest,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons strait his Denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe,
That seem'd but Zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolv'd in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipt in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colors flings,
Colors that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel plac'd;
His purple pinions op'ning to the sun,
He rais'd his azure wand, and thus begun:
"Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear!

Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Dæmons, hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assign'd
By laws eternal to th' aërial kind.
Some in the fields of purest Æther play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets thro' the boundless sky.
Some less refin'd, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of Nations own,
And guard with Arms divine the British Throne.
"Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, tho' less glorious care;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprison'd essences exhale;
To draw fresh colors from the vernal flow'rs;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs:
Nay, oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Fur-below.
"This day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair
That e'er deserv'd a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight;
But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honor or her new brocade,
Forget her pray'rs or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock must fall.
Haste, then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.
"To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the Petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Tho' stiff with hoops, and arm'd with ribs of whale;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.
"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stopp'd in vials, or transfix'd with pins;
Or plung'd in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedg'd whole ages in a bodkin's eye:
Gums and Pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogg'd he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or Alum styptics with contracting pow'r
Shrink his thin essence like a rivel'd flow'r;
Or, as Ixion fix'd, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling Mill,
In fumes of burning Chocolate shall glow,

And tremble at the sea that froths below!"
He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear.
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
Of foreign Tyrants and of Nymphs at home;
Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes Tea.
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court.
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that*.
Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labors of the Toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous Knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perch'd upon a Matadore,[1]
Then each, according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
Behold four Kings in majesty rever'd,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair Queens whose hands sustain a flow'r,
Th' expressive emblem of their softer pow'r;
Four Knaves in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And particolor'd troops, a shining train,

[1] The name of the three highest cards in the game of Ombre. In order of rank they are Spadillio (ace of spades), Manillio (two of black trumps, seven of red), and Basto (ace of clubs).

Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skilful Nymph reviews her force with care:
Let Spades be trumps! she said; and trumps they were.
Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable Lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.
As many more Manillio forc'd to yield,
And march'd a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto follow'd, but his fate more hard
Gain'd but one trump and one Plebeian card.
With his broad sabre next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight reveal'd;
The rest, his many-color'd robe conceal'd.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
Ev'n mighty Pam, that Kings and Queens o'erthrew
And mow'd down armies in the fights of Loo,[1]
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguish'd by the victor Spade!
Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black Tyrant first her victim dy'd,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barb'rous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread,
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe?
The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroider'd King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with pow'rs combin'd,
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strow the level green.
Thus when disper'sd a routed army runs
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye;
The pierc'd battalions disunited fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.[2]
And now (as oft in some distemper'd State)
On one nice Trick depends the gen'ral fate;
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: The King unseen
Lurk'd in her hand, and mourn'd his captive Queen:
He springs to Vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;

[1] A game, in which Pam is the highest card.

[2] To win the codille was for the defender of the pool to take most tricks.

The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
Oh thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate,
Sudden, these honors shall be snatch'd away,
And curs'd for ever this victorious day.
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill[1] turns round;
On shining Altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide.
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the Fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipp'd, the fuming liquor fann'd,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes display'd,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapors to the Baron's brain
New Stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's Fate!
Chang'd to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injur'd hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case;
So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprites repair;
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitch'd the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she look'd back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the Virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclin'd,
He watch'd th' Ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he view'd, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.
Amaz'd, confus'd, he found his pow'r expir'd,
Resign'd to fate, and with a sigh retir'd.
The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring Forfex wide,
T' inclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
Ev'n then, before the fatal engine clos'd,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interpos'd;
Fate urg'd the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain
(But airy substance soon unites again):
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!
Then flash'd the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.

[1] For grinding coffee.

Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last;
Or when rich China vessels fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!
"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,
(The victor cried) the glorious Prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis [1] shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a Lady's bed;
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze;
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honor, name, and praise shall live!"
What Time would spare, from Steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labor of the Gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial tow'rs of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel
The conqu'ring force of unresisted steel?

CANTO IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress'd,
And secret passions labor'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robb'd of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refus'd a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd Hair.
For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew
And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sully'd the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repair'd to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.
Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapor reach'd the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, shelter'd close from air,
And screen'd in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim [2] at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne: alike in place,
But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white array'd;
With store of pray'rs for mornings, nights, and noons,
Her hand is fill'd; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,

[1] *The New Atlantis* (1709), a popular and somewhat scandalous book by Mrs. Manley.

[2] headache, or languor

Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practis'd to lisp and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapt in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.
A constant Vapor o'er the palace flies;
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise,
Dreadful, as hermit's dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids:
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires:
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.[1]
Unnumber'd throngs on every side are seen,
Of bodies chang'd to various forms by Spleen.
Here living Tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout;
A Pipkin[2] there, like Homer's tripod, walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pie talks;[3]
Men prove with child, as pow'rful fancy works,
And maids turn'd bottles, call aloud for corks.
Safe pass'd the Gnome thro' this fantastic band,
A branch of healing Spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus address'd the pow'r: "Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen;
Parent of vapors, and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit;
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray!
A nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But, oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like Citron-waters[4] matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caus'd suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discompos'd the head-dress of a Prude,
Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,[5]
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease,
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin;
That single act gives half the world the spleen."
The Goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, tho' she grants his pray'r.
A wond'rous Bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A Vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.

[1] Interposing in behalf of mankind.
[2] small earthenware jar
[3] Alludes to a real fact; a lady of distinction imagined herself in this condition. (Pope)
[4] A cordial distilled from spirits and the rind of citrons and lemons.
[5] discomfort

The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.
Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected, and her hair unbound,
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the Furies issu'd at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cry'd,
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" reply'd,)
"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with tort'ring irons wreath'd around?
For this with fillets strain'd your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead? [1]
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the Fops envy, and the ladies stare!
Honor forbid! at whose unrivall'd shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all, our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honor in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'T will then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Expos'd thro' crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heighten'd, by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow,
And Wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to Chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
She said; then raging to Sir Plume [2] repairs,
And bids her Beau demand the precious hairs:
(Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
And thus broke out—"My Lord, why, what the devil!
Zounds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on 't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair"—he spoke, and rapp'd his box.
"It grieves me much," reply'd the Peer again,
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain;
But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honors shall renew,
Clipp'd from the lovely head where late it grew)
That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honors of her head.

[1] Curl papers were fastened with ends of soft lead.

[2] Sir George Brown, who was greatly incensed that Pope should have made him talk nothing but nonsense.

But Umbriel, hateful Gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drown'd in tears;
On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she rais'd; and thus she said:
"For ever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of Courts to num'rous ills betray'd.
Oh had I rather unadmir'd remain'd
In some lone isle, or distant Northern land,
Where the gilt Chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea! [1]
There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What mov'd my mind with youthful Lords to roam?
Oh had I stay'd, and said my pray'rs at home!
'Twas this, the morning omens seem'd to tell:
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tott'ring China shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A Sylph too warn'd me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believ'd too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy rapine spares:
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate forsees its own;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

[1] tea

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears.
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fix'd the Trojan [2] could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido rag'd in vain.
Then grave Clarissa graceful wav'd her fan;
Silence ensu'd, and thus the nymph began:
"Say why are beauties prais'd and honor'd most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why deck'd with all that land and sea afford,
Why Angels call'd, and Angel-like ador'd?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-glov'd Beaux?

[2] Æneas

Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows?
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains,
That men may say, when we the front-box grace,
'Behold the first in virtue as in face!'
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charm'd the small-pox, or chas'd old age away;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a Saint;
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,
Curl'd or uncurl'd, since Locks will turn to gray;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;
What then remains but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humor still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good-humor can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."
So spoke the Dame, but no applause ensu'd;
Belinda frown'd, Thalestris call'd her Prude.
"To arms, to arms!" the fierce Virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;
Heroes' and Heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And bass and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found;
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:
Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around;
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound:
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height,
Clapp'd his glad wings, and sate to view the fight:
Propp'd on their bodkin spears, the Sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While thro' the press enrag'd Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A Beau and Witling perish'd in the throng;
One died in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cry'd Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast;
"Those eyes are made so killing"—was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flow'ry margin lies

Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies.
When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a frown;
She smil'd to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the Beau reviv'd again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the Men's wits against the Lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See, fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor fear'd the Chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold Lord, with manly strength endu'd,
She with one finger and a thumb subdu'd:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of Snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.
"Now meet thy fate," incens'd Belinda cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great-great-grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Form'd a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin grac'd her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)
"Boast not my fall," he cry'd, "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low.
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."
"Restore the Lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the Lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are cross'd,
And chiefs contend 'till all the prize is lost!
The Lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So heav'n decrees! with heav'n who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the Lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasur'd there.
There Heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases,
And beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.
There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,
And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's pray'rs,

The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dry'd butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Tho' mark'd by none but quick, poetic eyes:
(So Rome's great founder [1] to the heav'ns withdrew,
To Proculus [2] alone confess'd in view)
A sudden Star, it shot thro' liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's [3] Locks first rose so bright,
The heav'ns bespangling with dishevell'd light.
The Sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleas'd pursue its progress thro' the skies.
This the Beau monde shall from the Mall [4] survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray.
This the blest Lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake; [5]
This Partridge [6] soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks thro' Galileo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When after millions slain, yourself shall die:
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

[1] A legend of Romulus
[2] Romulus appeared to him after death and prophesied the greatness of Rome.
[3] An Egyptian queen, who dedicated her hair in the temple for the safe return of her husband from war. It was said to have become the constellation called Coma Berenices.
[4] On the north side of St. James' Park, a fashionable place for walking in the evening.
[5] Rosamond's Lake, in St. James' Park.
[6] John Partridge was a ridiculous stargazer, who in his almanacks every year never failed to predict the downfall of the Pope, and the King of France, then at war with the English. (Pope) He was ridiculed by Swift, Addison, Steele, and others.

AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

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I

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill;
But, of the two, less dang'rous is th' offence
To tire our patience, than mislead our sense.
Some few in that, but numbers err in this,
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss;
A fool might once himself alone expose,
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.
'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.
In Poets as true genius is but rare,
True Taste as seldom is the Critic's share;
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,
These born to judge, as well as those to write.
Let such teach others who themselves excel,
And censure freely who have written well.
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not Critics to their judgment too?
Yet if we look more closely, we shall find
Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind:
Nature affords at least a glimm'ring light;
The lines, tho' touched but faintly, are drawn right.
But as the slightest sketch, if justly trac'd,
Is by ill-coloring but the more disgrac'd,
So by false learning is good sense defac'd:
Some are bewilder'd in the maze of schools,
And some made coxcombs Nature meant but fools.
In search of wit these lose their common sense,
And then turn Critics in their own defence:
Each burns alike, who can, or cannot write,
Or with a Rival's, or an Eunuch's spite.
All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side.
If Mævius [1] scribble in Apollo's spite,
There are who judge still worse than he can write.
Some have at first for Wits, then Poets, past,

[1] Roman poetaster, mentioned by Virgil.

'Turn'd Critics next, and prov'd plain fools at last.
Some neither can for Wits nor Critics pass,
As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.
Those half-learn'd witlings, num'rous in our isle,
As half-form'd insects on the banks of Nile;
Unfinish'd things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation's so equivocal:
To tell 'em, would a hundred tongues require,
Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire.
But you who seek to give and merit fame,
And justly bear a Critic's noble name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste, and learning go;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.
Nature to all things fix'd the limit fit,
And wisely curb'd proud man's pretending wit.
As on the land while here the ocean gains,
In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;
Thus in the soul while memory prevails,
The solid pow'r of understanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away.
One science only will one genius fit;
So vast is art, so narrow human wit:
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in those confin'd to single parts.
Like kings we lose the conquests gain'd before,
By vain ambition still to make them more;
Each might his sev'ral province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.
First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still[1] the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides:
In some fair body thus th' informing soul
With spirits feeds, with vigor fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and ev'ry nerve sustains;
Itself unseen, but in th' effects, remains.
Some, to whom Heav'n in wit has been profuse,
Want as much more, to turn it to its use;
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
Tho' meant each other's aid, like man and wife.
'Tis more to guide, than spur the Muse's steed;
Restrain his fury, than provoke his speed;
The winged courser,[2] like a gen'rous horse,
Shows most true metal when you check his course.
Those Rules of old discovered, not devis'd,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd;
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same laws which first herself ordain'd.
Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress, and when indulge our flights:
High on Parnassus' top her sons she show'd,

[1] always [2] Pegasus

And pointed out those arduous paths they trod;
Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,
And urg'd the rest by equal steps to rise.
Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,
She drew from them what they deriv'd from Heav'n.
The gen'rous Critic fann'd the Poet's fire,
And taught the world with reason to admire.
Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid prov'd,
To dress her charms, and make her more belov'd:
But following wits from that intention stray'd,
Who could not win the mistress, woo'd the maid;
Against the Poets their own arms they turn'd,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learn'd.
So modern 'Pothecaries, taught the art
By Doctor's bills to play the Doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.
Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey,
Nor time nor moths e'er spoil'd so much as they.
Some drily plain, without invention's aid,
Write dull receipts how poems may be made.
These leave the sense, their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.
You then whose judgment the right course would steer,
Know well each ANCIENT's proper character;
His fable, subject, scope in ev'ry page;
Religion, Country, genius of his Age:
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticise.
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring.
Still with itself compar'd, his text peruse;
And let your comment be the Mantuan muse.[1]
When first young Maro [1] in his boundless mind
A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd,
Perhaps he seem'd above the critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw:
But when t' examine ev'ry part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.
Convinc'd, amaz'd, he checks the bold design;
And rules as strict his labor'd work confine,
As if the Stagirite [2] o'erlooked each line.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy nature is to copy them.
Some beauties yet no Precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.
Music resembles Poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.
If, where the rules not far enough extend
(Since rules were made but to promote their end),
Some lucky License answer to the full
Th' intent propos'd, that License is a rule.
Thus Pegasus, a nearer way to take,

[1] Virgil [2] Aristotle

May boldly deviate from the common track;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which, without passing thro' the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains.
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,
Which out of nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.
Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true Critics dare not mend.
But tho' the Ancients thus their rules invade
(As Kings dispense with laws themselves have made),
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its End;
Let it be seldom, and compell'd by need;
And have, at least, their precedent to plead.
The Critic else proceeds without remorse,
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force.
I know they are, to whose presumptuous thoughts
Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults.
Some figures monstrous and mis-shap'd appear,
Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportion'd to their light, or place,
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.
A prudent chief not always must display
His pow'rs in equal ranks, and fair array.
But with th' occasion and the place comply,
Conceal his force, nay, seem sometimes to fly.
Those oft are stratagems which error seem,
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.
Still green with bays each ancient Altar stands,
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;
Secure from Flames, from Envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive War, and all-involving Age.
See, from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!
Hear, in all tongues consenting Pæans ring!
In praise so just let ev'ry voice be join'd,
And fill the gen'ral chorus of mankind.
Hail, Bards triumphant! born in happier days;
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honors with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
Oh may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire,
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights;
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes),
To teach vain Wits a science little known,
T' admire superior sense, and doubt their own!

II

Of all the Causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is *Pride*, the never-failing voice of fools.
Whatever nature has in worth denied,

She gives in large recruits[1] of needful pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with wind:
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty Void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
Make use of ev'ry friend—and ev'ry foe.
A *little learning* is a dang'rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:[2]
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fir'd at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of Arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanc'd, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleas'd at first the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
Th' eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But, those attain'd, we tremble to survey
The growing labors of the lengthen'd way,
Th' increasing prospect tires our wand'ring eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

A perfect Judge will read each word of Wit
With the same spirit that its author writ:
Survey the WHOLE, nor seek slight faults to find
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The gen'rous pleasure to be charm'd with Wit.
But in such lays as neither ebb, nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep;
We cannot blame indeed—but we may sleep.
In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not th' exactness of peculiar parts;
'Tis not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.
Thus when we view some well-proportion'd dome
(The world's just wonder, and ev'n thine, O Rome!),
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to th' admiring eyes;
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear;
The Whole at once is bold, and regular.
Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In every work regard the writer's End,
Since none can compass more than they intend;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due;
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,
T' avoid great errors, must the less commit.
Neglect the rules each verbal Critic lays,
For not to know some trifles is a praise.
Most Critics, fond of some subservient art,

[1] supplies

[2] Pieria, in Thessaly, was the birthplace of the muses.

Still make the Whole depend upon a Part:
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one lov'd Folly sacrifice.
Once on a time, La Mancha's Knight,[1] they say,
A certain bard encount'ring on the way,
Discours'd in terms as just, with looks as sage,
As e'er could Dennis[2] of the Grecian stage;
Concluding all were desp'rate sots and fools,
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.
Our Author, happy in a judge so nice,
Produc'd his Play, and begg'd the Knight's advice;
Made him observe the subject, and the plot,
The manners, passions, unities; what not?
All which, exact to rule, were brought about,
Were but a Combat in the lists left out.
"What! leave the Combat out?" exclaims the Knight;
Yes, or we must renounce the Stagirite.
"Not so, by Heav'n!" he answers in a rage,
"Knights, squires, and steeds, must enter on the stage."
So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain.
"Then build a new, or act it in a plain."
Thus Critics, of less judgment than caprice,
Curious not knowing, not exact but nice,
Form short ideas; and offend in arts
(As most in manners) by a love to parts.
Some to CONCEIT alone their taste confine,
And glitt'ring thoughts struck out at ev'ry line;
Pleas'd with a work where nothing's just or fit,
One glaring Chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets like painters, thus, unskill'd to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True Wit is Nature to advantage dress'd,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd;
Something, whose truth convinc'd at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind.
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit,
For works may have more wit than does 'em good,
As bodies perish thro' excess of blood.
Others for LANGUAGE all their care express,
And value books, as women men, for Dress:
Their praise is still,—the Style is excellent:
The Sense, they humbly take upon content.
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found,
False Eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colors spreads on ev'ry place;
The face of Nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay:
But true expression, like th' unchanging Sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable;

[1] Don Quixote. The incident is not in Cervantes' work but in a continuation of it.

[2] John Dennis (1657-1734), minor critic and dramatist.

A vile conceit in pompous words express'd
Is like a clown in regal purple dress'd:
For diff'rent styles with diff'rent subjects sort,
As several garbs with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretence,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense;
Such labor'd nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze th' unlearn'd, and make the learned smile.
Unlucky, as Fungoso in the play,[1]
These sparks with awkward vanity display
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best,
As apes our grandsires, in their doublets drest.
In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
Alike fantastic, if too new, or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are try'd,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
But most by Numbers judge a Poet's song;
And smooth or rough, with them is right or wrong:
In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to Church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Tho' oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvary'd chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
Where-e'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"
In the next line, it "whispers through the trees":
If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep,"
The reader's threaten'd (not in vain) with "sleep":
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine[2] ends the song
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know
What's roundly smooth or languishingly slow;
And praise the easy vigor of a line,
Where Denham's strength, and Waller's sweetness join.[3]
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
The sound must seem an Echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,

[1] A character in Ben Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599). He tries to imitate the dress and manner of Fastidious Brisk, another character in the play.

[2] The next line is an Alexandrine (six stresses).

[3] Sir John Denham (1615-1668) and Edmund Waller (1605-1687) were forerunners of the school of Pope. Both were rather overrated as poets.

The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,[1]
The line, too, labors, and the words move slow;
Not so, when swift Camilla scours the plain,[2]
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.
Hear how Timotheus' varied lays surprise,[3]
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While, at each change, the son of Libyan Jove
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love,
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the world's victor stood subdu'd by sound!
The pow'r of Music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is DRYDEN now.
Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such,
Who still are pleas'd too little or too much.
At ev'ry trifle scorn to take offence,
That always shows great pride or little sense;
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay Turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we thro' mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.
Some foreign writers, some our own despise;
The Ancients only, or the Moderns, prize.
Thus Wit, like Faith, by each man is apply'd
To one small sect, and all are damn'd beside.
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm the last;
Tho' each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not then if Wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true.
Some ne'er advance a Judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the Town;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd the worst is he
That in proud dulness joins with Quality,
A constant Critic at the great man's board,
To fetch and carry nonsense for my Lord.
What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer, or me?
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!

[1] Cf. the *Iliad*, VII, 268 ff
[2] Cf. the *Æneid*, VII, 808 ff, especially in Dryden's translation
[3] Timotheus was a poet of the time of Alexander (he really died three years before Alexander's birth). The allusion here is to Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*.

Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!
The Vulgar thus through Imitation err;
As oft the Learn'd by being singular;
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong;
So Schismatics the plain believers quit,
And are but damn'd for having too much wit.
Some praise at morning what they blame at night;
But always think the last opinion right.
A Muse by these is like a mistress us'd,
This hour she's idoliz'd, the next abus'd;
While their weak heads, like towns unfortify'd,
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side.
Ask them the cause; they're wiser still, they say;
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day.
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow,
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.
Once School-divines this zealous isle o'erspread;
Who knew most Sentences,[1] was deepest read;
Faith, Gospel, all, seem'd made to be disputed,
And none had sense enough to be confuted:
Scotists and Thomists,[2] now, in peace remain,
Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck-lane.[3]
If Faith itself has diff'rent dresses worn,
What wonder modes in Wit should take their turn?
Oft', leaving what is natural and fit,
The current folly proves the ready wit;
And authors think their reputation safe,
Which lives as long as fools are pleas'd to laugh,
Some valuing those of their own side or mind,
Still make themselves the measure of mankind:
Fondly we think we honor merit then,
When we but praise ourselves in other men.
Parties in Wit attend on those of State,
And public faction doubles private hate.
Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,
In various shapes of Parsons, Critics, Beaus; [4]
But sense surviv'd, when merry jests were past;
For rising merit will buoy up at last.
Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,
New Blackmores and new Milbourns must arise: [5]
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,
Zoilus [6] again would start up from the dead.
Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue;
But like a shadow, proves the substance true;
For envy'd Wit, like Sol eclips'd, makes known
Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own,
When first that sun too pow'rful beams displays,
It draws up vapors which obscure its rays;

[1] Passages from the Fathers. A collection of such authoritative utterances was gathered together in the twelfth century by Peter Lombard, Bishop of Paris, and was widely known.

[2] Followers of Duns Scotus (†1308) and Thomas Aquinas (1227-1274).

[3] A place where old and second-hand books were sold formerly, near Smithfield. (Pope)

[4] "The parson alluded to was Jeremy Collier; the critic [and beau] was the Duke of Buckingham." (Warton). Probably others were included.

[5] Sir Richard Blackmore, physician and poet, and the Rev. Luke Milbourn, both of whom had attacked Dryden.

[6] Greek rhetorician (fourth century, B.C.) who attacked Homer.

But ev'n those clouds at last adorn its way,
Reflect new glories and augment the day.
Be thou the first true merit to befriend;
His praise is lost, who stays, till all commend.
Short is the date, alas, of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.
No longer now that golden age appears,
When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years:
Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescore is all ev'n that can boast;
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be.
So when the faithful pencil has design'd
Some bright Idea of the master's mind,
Where a new world leaps out at his command,
And ready Nature waits upon his hand;
When the ripe colors soften and unite,
And sweetly melt into just shade and light;
When mellowing years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure just begins to live,
The treach'rous colors the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away!
Unhappy Wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings.
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-liv'd vanity is lost:
Like some fair flow'r the early spring supplies,
That gayly blooms, but ev'n in blooming dies.
What is this Wit, which must our cares employ?
The owner's wife, that other men enjoy;
Then most our trouble still when most admir'd,
And still the more we give, the more requir'd;
Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please;
'Tis what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,
By fools 'tis hated, and by knaves undone!
If Wit so much from Ign'rance undergo,
Ah let not Learning too commence its foe!
Of old, those met rewards who could excell,
And such were prais'd who but endeavor'd well:
Tho' triumphs were to gen'rals only due,
Crowns were reserv'd to grace the soldiers, too.
Now, they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown,
Employ their pains to spurn some others down;
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,
Contending wits become the sport of fools:
But still the worst with most regret commend,
For each ill Author is as bad a Friend.
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urg'd thro' sacred lust of praise!
Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,
Nor in the Critic let the Man be lost.
Good-nature and good-sense must ever join;
To err is human, to forgive, divine.
But if in noble minds some dregs remain
Not yet purg'd off, of spleen and sour disdain;
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times.
No pardon vile Obscenity should find,

Tho' wit and art conspire to move your mind;
But Dulness with Obscenity must prove
As shameful, sure, as Impotence in love.
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,
Sprung the rank weed, and thriv'd with large increase:
When love was all an easy Monarch's care;
Seldom at council, never in a war:
Jilts rul'd the state, and statesmen farces writ;
Nay, wits had pensions, and young Lords had wit:
The Fair sat panting at a Courtier's play,
And not a Mask [1] went unimprov'd away:
The modest fan was lifted up no more,
And Virgins smil'd at what they blush'd before.
The following license of a Foreign reign [2]
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus [3] drain;
Then unbelieving priests reform'd the nation,
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation; [4]
Where Heav'n's free subjects might their rights dispute,
Lest God himself should seem too absolute:
Pulpits their sacred satire learn'd to spare,
And Vice admir'd [5] to find a flatt'rer there!
Encourag'd thus, Wit's Titans brav'd the skies,
And the press groan'd with licens'd blasphemies.
These monsters, Critics! with your darts engage,
Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage!

Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an author into vice;
All seems infected that th' infected spy,
As all looks yellow to the jaundic'd eye.

III

Learn then what Morals Critics ought to show,
For 'tis but half a Judge's task, to know.
'Tis not enough, taste, judgment, learning, join;
In all you speak, let truth and candor shine:
That not alone what to your sense is due
All may allow; but seek your friendship, too.
Be silent always when you doubt your sense;
And speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence:
Some positive, persisting fops we know,
Who, if once wrong, will needs be always so;
But you, with pleasure own your errors past,
And make each day a Critic on the last.
'Tis not enough, your counsel still be true;
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do;
Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot.
Without Good Breeding, truth is disapprov'd;
That only makes superior sense belov'd.
Be niggards of advice on no pretence;
For the worst avarice is that of sense.
With mean complacence ne'er betray your trust,
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.
Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;
Those best can bear reproof, who merit praise.

[1] Women wore masks in the theatre.
[2] William III
[3] The name of two Italian theologians of the sixteenth century who denied the divinity of Christ, the existence of Satan, the doctrines of original sin, eternal punishment, etc.
[4] Refers to the Latitudinarian divines, of whom Bishop Burnet was most prominent.
[5] wondered

'Twere well might critics still this freedom take,
But Appius[1] reddens at each word you speak,
And stares, tremendous, with a threat-'ning eye,
Like some fierce Tyrant in old tapestry.
Fear most to tax an Honorable fool,
Whose right it is, uncensur'd, to be dull;
Such, without wit, are Poets when they please,
As without learning they can take Degrees.[2]
Leave dang'rous truths to unsuccessful Satires,
And flattery to fulsome Dedicators,
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no more
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er.
'Tis best sometimes your censure to restrain,
And charitably let the dull be vain:
Your silence there is better than your spite,
For who can rail so long as they can write?
Still humming on, their drowsy course they keep,
And lash'd so long, like tops, are lash'd asleep.
False steps but help them to renew the race,
As, after stumbling, Jades will mend their pace.
What crowds of these, impenitently bold,
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,
Still run on Poets, in a raging vein,
Ev'n to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,
Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,
And rhyme with all the rage of Impotence.
Such shameless Bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd Critics too.
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head,
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,
And always list'ning to himself appears.
All books he reads, and all he reads assails,
From Dryden's Fables down to Durfey's Tales.[3]
With him, most authors steal their works, or buy;
Garth did not write his own Dispensary.[4]
Name a new Play, and he's the Poet's friend,
Nay, show'd his faults—but when would Poets mend?
No place so sacred from such fops is barr'd,
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's churchyard:[5]
Nay, fly to altars; there they'll talk you dead:
For Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread.
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,
It still looks home, and short excursions makes;
But rattling nonsense in full volleys breaks,
And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,
Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide.
But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbiass'd, or by favor, or by spite;

[1] Dennis, so alluded to because of his play *Appius and Virginia.* See note on line 270.
[2] Noblemen and sons of noblemen were given the degree of M.A. at Oxford and Cambridge without examination.
[3] Thomas D'Urfey (1653-1723), whose *Tales* represent a very low ebb of English verse.
[4] Sir Samuel Garth (1661-1719), physician and poet. His *Dispensary* is a mock epic.
[5] Headquarters of booksellers.

Not dully prepossess'd, nor blindly right;
Tho' learn'd, well-bred; and tho' well-bred, sincere,
Modestly bold, and humanly severe:
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?
Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd;
A knowledge both of books and human kind:
Gen'rous converse; a soul exempt from pride;
And love to praise, with reason on his side?
Such once were Critics; such the happy few,
Athens and Rome in better ages knew.
The mighty Stagirite first left the shore,
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore:
He steer'd securely, and discover'd far,
Led by the light of the Mæonian Star.[1]
Poets, a race long unconfin'd, and free,
Still fond and proud of savage liberty,
Receiv'd his laws; and stood convinc'd 'twas fit,
Who conquer'd Nature, should preside o'er Wit.[2]
Horace still charms with graceful negligence,
And without method talks us into sense,
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey
The truest notions in the easiest way.
He, who supreme in judgment, as in wit,
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,
Yet judg'd with coolness, tho' he sung with fire;
His Precepts teach but what his works inspire.
Our Critics take a contrary extreme,
They judge with fury, but they write with fle'me[3]
Nor suffers Horace more in wrong Translations
By wits, than Critics in as wrong Quotations.
See Dionysius[4] Homer's thoughts refine,
And call new beauties forth from ev'ry line!
Fancy and art in gay Petronius please,
The scholar's learning, with the courtier's ease.
In grave Quintilian's copious work, we find
The justest rules, and clearest method join'd:
Thus useful arms in magazines we place,
All rang'd in order, and dispos'd with grace,
But less to please the eye, than arm the hand,
Still fit for use, and ready at command.
Thee, bold Longinus! all the Nine inspire,
And bless their Critic with a Poet's fire.
An ardent Judge, who zealous in his trust,
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just;
Whose own example strengthens all his laws;
And is himself that great Sublime[5] he draws.
Thus long succeeding Critics justly reign'd,
License repress'd, and useful laws ordain'd.
Learning and Rome alike in empire grew;
And Arts still follow'd where her Eagles flew;
From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw Learning fall, and Rome.
With Tyranny, then Superstition join'd,
As that the body, this enslav'd the mind;
Much was believ'd, but little understood,
And to be dull was constru'd to be good;
A second deluge Learning thus o'er-run,

[1] Homer
[2] *I.e.*, that Aristotle, who by his *Physics* was said to have conquered nature, should by virtue of his *Poetics* preside over wit.
[3] phlegm, *i.e.*, lack of spirit, dullness
[4] Of Halicarnassus, Greek rhetorician.
[5] The most famous work of Longinus was his *Treatise on the Sublime.*

And the Monks finish'd what the Goths begun.
At length Erasmus, that great injur'd name
(The glory of the Priesthood, and the shame!),
Stemm'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age,
And drove those holy Vandals off the stage.
But see! each Muse, in Leo's golden days,[1]
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays,
Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then Sculpture and her sister-arts revive;
Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live;
With sweeter notes each rising Temple rung;
A Raphael painted, and a Vida[2] sung.
Immortal Vida: on whose honor'd brow
The Poet's bays and Critic's ivy grow:
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!
But soon by impious arms from Latium chas'd,[3]
Their ancient bounds the banish'd Muses pass'd;
Thence Arts o'er all the northern world advance,
But Critic-learning flourish'd most in France:
The rules a nation, born to serve,[4] obeys;
And Boileau[5] still in right of Horace sways.

But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despis'd,
And kept unconquer'd, and unciviliz'd;
Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,
We still defy'd the Romans, as of old.
Yet some there were, among the sounder few
Of those who less presum'd, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,
And here restor'd Wit's fundamental laws.
Such was the Muse, whose rules and practice tell,
"Nature's chief Master-piece is writing well."[6]
Such was Roscommon,[7] not more learn'd than good,
With manners gen'rous as his noble blood;
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And ev'ry author's merit, but his own.
Such late was Walsh[8]—the Muse's judge and friend,
Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
To failings mild, but zealous for desert;
The clearest head, and the sincerest heart.
This humble praise, lamented shade! receive,
This praise at least a grateful Muse may give:
The Muse, whose early voice you taught to sing,
Prescrib'd her heights, and prun'd her tender wing,
(Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,
But in low numbers short excursions tries:
Content, if thence th' unlearn'd their wants may view,
The learn'd reflect on what before they knew:

[1] Leo X (1475-1521), an enthusiastic patron of art and literature.
[2] Italian critic, whose *Art of Poetry* Pope drew upon rather freely in the present work.
[3] Rome was sacked by the Duke of Bourbon in 1527.
[4] Sarcasm on French submission to Louis XIV's despotism.
[5] Boileau's *Art Poétique* was based on Horace's. Pope used both. (See introduction)
[6] A quotation from an *Essay on Poetry* by the Duke of Buckingham.
[7] The Earl of Roscommon wrote *An Essay on Translated Verse.*
[8] William Walsh (1663-1708).

Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;
Still pleas'd to praise, yet not afraid to blame,
Averse alike to flatter, or offend;
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend.

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT.[1]

[PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES]

ADVERTISEMENT

To the first publication of this *Epistle.*

This paper is a sort of bill of complaint, begun many years since, and drawn up by snatches, as the several occasions offered. I had no thoughts of publishing it, till it pleased some Persons of Rank and Fortune (the Authors of *Verses to the Imitator of Horace,* and of an *Epistle to a Doctor of Divinity from a Nobleman at Hampton Court*) [2] to attack, in a very extraordinary manner, not only my Writings (of which, being public, the Public is judge), but my Person, Morals, and Family, whereof, to those who know me not, a truer information may be requisite. Being divided between the necessity to say something of myself, and my own laziness to undertake so awkward a task, I thought it the shortest way to put the last hand to this Epistle. If it have anything pleasing, it will be that by which I am most desirous to please, the Truth and the Sentiment; and if anything offensive, it will be only to those I am least sorry to offend, the vicious or the ungenerous.

Many will know their own pictures in it, there being not a circumstance but what is true; but I have, for the most part, spared their Names, and they may escape being laughed at, if they please.

I would have some of them know, it was owing to the request of the learned and candid Friend to whom it is inscribed, that I make not as free use of theirs as they have done of mine. However, I shall have this advantage, and honor, on my side, that whereas, by their proceeding, any abuse may be directed at any man, no injury can possibly be done by mine, since a nameless character can never be found out, but by its truth and likeness.

P. Shut, shut the door, good John![3] fatigu'd, I said,
Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.
The Dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thickets, thro' my Grot[4] they glide;
By land, by water, they renew the charge;
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the Church is free;
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me;
Then from the Mint[5] walks forth the man of rhyme,
Happy to catch me just at Dinner-time.
Is there a Parson, much bemus'd in beer,
A maudlin Poetess, a rhyming Peer,

[1] Dr. John Arbuthnot (1675-1735), distinguished physician and scholar. The final 't' is pronounced.

[2] The first was supposedly written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and Lord Hervey; the second was by Hervey alone.

[3] John Serle, an old and faithful servant.

[4] An artificial grotto was one of the features of Pope's villa at Twickenham.

[5] An enclosure in Southwark where insolvent debtors, among others, could not be arrested. They could come out on Sundays without fear of being apprehended.

A Clerk, foredoom'd his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a Stanza, when he should engross?
Is there, who, lock'd from ink and paper, scrawls
With desp'rate charcoal round his darken'd walls?
All fly to TWIT'NAM, and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain. [22]
Arthur,[1] whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:
Poor Cornus [2] sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses Wit, and Poetry, and Pope.
Friend to my Life! (which did not you prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song)
What Drop or Nostrum can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a Fool's wrath or love? [30]
A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped.
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
Seiz'd and tied down to judge,[3] how wretched I!
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie.
To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave, exceeds all Pow'r of face.
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish, and an aching head;
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, "Keep your piece nine years." [4] [40]
"Nine years!" cries he, who high in Drury-lane,
Lull'd by soft Zephyrs thro' the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term [5] ends,
Oblig'd by hunger, and request of friends:
"The piece, you think, is incorrect? why, take it,
I'm all submission, what you'd have it, make it."
Three things another's modest wishes bound,
My friendship, and a Prologue, and ten pound.
Pitholeon [6] sends to me: "You know his Grace,
I want a patron; ask him for a Place." [50]
"Pitholeon libell'd me,"—"but here's a letter
Informs you, Sir. 'twas when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? Curll [7] invites to dine,
He'll write a *Journal,* or he'll turn Divine."
Bless me! a packet.—" 'Tis a stranger sues,
A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse."
If I dislike it, "Furies, death and rage!"
If I approve, "Commend it to the Stage."
There (thank my stars) my whole Commission ends,
The Play'rs and I are, luckily, no friends.
Fir'd that the house reject him, " 'Sdeath I'll print it, [61]
And shame the fools—Your Int'rest, Sir, with Lintot!" [8]
"Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much:"
"Not, Sir, if you revise it and retouch."
All my demurs but double his Attacks;
At last he whispers, "Do; and we go snacks." [9]
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door,

[1] Arthur Moore, a politician.
[2] Supposed to be Robert, Lord Walpole, whose wife left him in 1734.
[3] In Wycherley's *Plain Dealer* (Act v) Major Oldfox has the widow bound and gagged while he reads her his verses.
[4] Horace's *Art of Poetry,* v. 388.
[5] The 'season'; in London it corresponded with the sittings (Term) of the law courts.
[6] The name taken from a foolish poet of Rhodes, who pretended much to Greek. (Pope)
[7] Edmund Curll, an unscrupulous publisher with whom Pope several times quarreled.
[8] Bernard Lintot, Pope's publisher.
[9] shares

Sir, let me see your works and you no more.
'Tis sung, when Midas' Ears began to spring,
(Midas, a sacred person and a king)
His very Minister who spy'd them first,
(Some say his Queen) was forc'd to speak, or burst.[1]
And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?
A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in dang'rous things.
I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or Kings;
Keep close to Ears, and those let asses prick;
'Tis nothing—P. Nothing? if they bite and kick?
Out with it, DUNCIAD! let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an Ass:
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)
The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.
You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, Codrus![2] round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack:
Pit, Box, and gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.
Who shames a Scribbler? break one cobweb thro',
He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew:
Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain,
The creature's at his dirty work again,
Thron'd in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines!
Whom have I hurt? has Poet yet, or Peer,
Lost the arch'd eye-brow, or Parnassian sneer?
And has not Colley[3] still his Lord, and whore?
His Butchers Henley,[4] his free-masons Moore?
Does not one table Bavius[5] still admit?
Still to one Bishop Philips[6] seem a wit?
Still Sappho—A. Hold! for God's sake—you'll offend,
No Names!—be calm!—learn prudence of a friend!
I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
But foes like these—P. One Flatt'rer's worse than all.
Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right,
It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.
A fool quite angry is quite innocent:
Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they *repent*.
One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes:
One from all Grubstreet will my fame defend,
And more abusive, calls himself my friend.
This prints my *Letters*,[7] that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, "Subscribe, subscribe!"
There are, who to my person pay their court:
I cough like Horace, and, tho' lean, am short;
Ammon's great son[8] one shoulder had too high;
Such Ovid's nose, and "Sir! you have an Eye"—
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see
All that disgrac'd my Betters, met in me.
Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
"Just so immortal Maro[9] held his head."

[1] See above, p. 99.
[2] Elkanah Settle (1648-1724), bombastic playwright also satirized by Dryden.
[3] Colley Cibber
[4] Henley was an orator who declaimed in Butcher Row.
[5] Minor Roman poet, enemy of Virgil and Horace.
[6] Ambrose Phillips; Bishop Boulter was his great friend and patron.
[7] Curll printed some of Pope's letters in 1726.
[8] Alexander the Great
[9] Virgil

And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer died three thousand years ago.
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipt me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd.
The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not Wife,
To help me thro' this long disease, my Life,
To second, ARBUTHNOT! thy Art and Care,
And teach the Being you preserv'd, to bear.
But why then publish? Granville the polite,[1]
And knowing Walsh,[2] would tell me I could write;
Well-natur'd Garth [3] inflam'd with early praise;
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield,[4] read;
Ev'n mitred Rochester [5] would nod the head,
And St. John's self [6] (great Dryden's friends before)
With open arms receiv'd one Poet more.
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cookes.[7]
Soft were my numbers; who could take offence,
While pure Description held the place of Sense?
Like gentle *Fanny's* [8] was my flow'ry theme,
A painted mistress, or a purling stream.
Yet then did Gildon [9] draw his venal quill;—
I wish'd the man a dinner, and sat still.
Yet then did Dennis [10] rave in furious fret;
I never answer'd,—I was not in debt.
If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with Beldam or the Mint.
Did some more sober Critic come abroad;
If wrong, I smil'd; if right, I kiss'd the rod.
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 't were a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From slashing Bentley [11] down to pidling Tibalds:[12]
Each wight, who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each Word-catcher, that lives on syllables,
Ev'n such small Critics some regard may claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakespeare's name.
Pretty! in amber to observe the forms,

[1] George Granville, Lord Lansdowne
[2] William Walsh, who early encouraged and advised Pope.
[3] See *Essay on Criticism* above, line 619.
[4] These were statesmen interested in literature.
[5] Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester.
[6] Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.
[7] Authors of secret and scandalous History. (Pope)
[8] John, Lord Hervey, nicknamed Lord Fanny because of effeminate manners.
[9] Charles Gildon, who had attacked Pope.
[10] See *Essay on Criticism* above, line 270.
[11] Richard Bentley, a famous classical scholar, had criticised Pope's translation of Homer. His edition of *Paradise Lost* is alluded to in line 168.
[12] Lewis Theobald had exposed the faults of Pope's edition of Shakespeare and had just issued a very much better edition.

Or hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.
Were others angry: I excus'd them too;
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.
A man's true merit 't is not hard to find;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That Casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,
This, who can gratify? for who can guess?
The bard whom pilfer'd Pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,[1]
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains, from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year;
He, who still wanting, tho' he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left:
And He, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning:
And He, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not Poetry, but prose run mad:
All these, my modest Satire bade translate,
And own'd that nine such Poets made a Tate.[2]
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!
And swear, not Addison himself was safe.
Peace to all such! but were there One whose fires
True Genius kindles, and fair Fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne.
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caus'd himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserv'd to blame, or to commend,
A tim'rous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading ev'n fools, by Flatterers besieg'd,
And so obliging, that he ne'er oblig'd;
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While Wits and Templars ev'ry sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise:—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus[3] were he?
What tho' my Name stood rubric on the walls[4]
Or plaister'd posts, with claps,[5] in capitals?
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers' load,
On wings of winds came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the Race that write;
I kept, like Asian Monarchs, from their sight;
Poems I heeded (now be-rhym'd so long)

[1] Ambrose Philips, author of pastorals and translator of a book called *Persian Tales.*
[2] Nahun Tate, a wretched versifier.
[3] Pope originally wrote *Addison.*
[4] "Mr. Lintot, in Fleet Street, is so fond of red-letter title pages to the books he prints, that his show-boards and posts before his door are generally bedaubed with them." (Curll)
[5] posters

No more than thou, great GEORGE! a birth-day song.
I ne'er with wits or witlings pass'd my days,
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;
Nor like a puppy, daggled[1] thro' the town,
To fetch and carry and sing-song up and down;
Nor at Rehearsals sweat, and mouth'd and cry'd,
With handkerchief and orange at my side;
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,
To Bufo left the whole Castalian state.[2]
Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
Sat full-blown Bufo, puff'd by ev'ry quill;
Fed with soft Dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
His Library (where busts of Poets dead
And a true Pindar stood without a head)
Receiv'd of wits an undistinguish'd race,
Who first his judgment ask'd, and then a place:
Much they extoll'd his pictures, much his seat,
And flatter'd ev'ry day, and some days eat:[3]
Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise;
To some a dry rehearsal was assign'd,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh,
Dryden alone escap'd this judging eye:
But still the Great have kindness in reserve;
He help'd to bury whom he help'd to starve.[4]

May some choice patron bless each gray goose quill!
May ev'ry Bavius have his Bufo still!
So, when a Statesman wants a day's defence,
Or Envy holds a whole week's war with Sense,
Or simple pride for flatt'ry makes demands,
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!
Blest be the Great! for those they take away,
And those they left me; for they left me GAY;[5]
Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My Verse[6] and QUEENSB'RY[7] weeping o'er thy urn.
Oh let me live my own, and die so too!
(To live and die is all I have to do:)
Maintain a Poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please;
Above a Patron, tho' I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my friend.
I was not born for Courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my pray'rs;
Can sleep without a Poem in my head;
Nor know, if Dennis be alive or dead.
Why am I ask'd what next shall see the light?
Heav'ns! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has Life no joys for me? or, (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
"I found him close with Swift"—"Indeed? no doubt,"
(Cries prating Balbus) "something will come out."

[1] dragged through mud
[2] The allusion is doubtful but is probably to the Earl of Halifax. The Castalian spring on Mount Parnassus was sacred to the muses.
[3] ate
[4] Lord Halifax contributed towards an elaborate funeral for Dryden.
[5] John Gay, author of the *Beggar's Opera*, was one of Pope's closest friends.
[6] Pope wrote an epitaph on Gay.
[7] The Duchess of Queensbury, in whose house Gay died.

'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will.
"No, such a Genius never can lie still;"
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first Lampoon Sir Will,[1] or Bubo[2] makes.
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,
When ev'ry Coxcomb knows me by my Style?
Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-eyed Virgin steal a tear.
But he who hurts a harmless neighbor's peace,
Insults fall'n worth, or Beauty in distress,
Who loves a Lie, lame Slander helps about,
Who writes a Libel, or who copies out:
That Fop, whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame;
Who can your merit selfishly approve,
And show the sense of it without the love;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honor, injur'd, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray:
Who to the Dean, and silver bell can swear,
And sees at Canons what was never there;[3]
Who reads, but with a lust to misapply,
Make Satire a Lampoon, and Fiction, Lie.
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead,
Let Sporus[4] tremble—A. What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys:
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks;
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar Toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies.
His wit all see-saw, between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.
Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
A Cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust;
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.

[1] Sir William Young
[2] Bubb Doddington, afterwards Lord Melcombe.
[3] Some one had told the Duke of Chandos (whose house was at Canons) that Pope had ridiculed him.
[4] John, Lord Hervey. Cf. line 149.

Not Fortune's worshipper, nor fashion's fool,
Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool,
Not proud nor servile;—be one Poet's praise,
That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways:
That Flatt'ry, ev'n to Kings, he held a shame,
And thought a Lie in verse or prose the same.
That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song:
That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critic, half approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;
The tale reviv'd, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash, and dulness not his own;
The morals blacken'd when the writings scape,
The libel'd person, and the pictur'd shape;
Abuse, on all he lov'd, or lov'd him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father dead;
The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
Perhaps, yet vibrates on his Sov'REIGN's ear:—
Welcome for thee, fair Virtue! all the past;
For thee, fair Virtue! welcome ev'n the last!
A. But why insult the poor, affront the great?
P. A knave's a knave, to me, in ev'ry state:
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
Sporus [1] at court, or Japhet [2] in a jail,
A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post [3] corrupt, or of the shire,
If on a Pillory, or near a Throne,
He gain his Prince's ear, or lose his own.
Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho [4] can tell you how this man was bit;
This dreaded Sat'rist Dennis will confess
Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress: [5]
So humble, he has knock'd at Tibbald's door,
Has drunk with Cibber, nay has rhym'd for Moore.
Full ten years slander'd, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's [6] lie.
To please a Mistress one aspers'd his life;
He lash'd him not, but let her be his wife.
Let Budgel [7] charge low Grubstreet on his quill,
And write whate'er he pleas'd, except his Will;
Let the two Curlls of Town and Court, abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and muse.

[1] See line 305.
[2] Japhet Crooke, in jail for extensive forgeries and other offenses.
[3] One who stood near the sheriff's pillars ready to swear to anything for pay.
[4] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with whom Pope quarreled.
[5] In 1733 Pope wrote a prologue to a play acted for the benefit of his ancient enemy, Dennis.
[6] Leonard Welsted, a poet, who bitterly attacked Pope.
[7] Budgel abused Pope in a weekly paper called the *Bee*. He was supposed to have forged a will by which he got a large fortune.

Yet why? that Father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbor fool:
That harmless Mother thought no wife a whore:
Hear this, and spare his family, James Moore!
Unspotted names, and memorable long!
If there be force in Virtue, or in Song.
Of gentle blood (part shed in Honor's cause,
While yet in Britain Honor had applause)
Each parent sprung—A. What fortune, Pray?—P. Their own,
And better got, than Bestia's from the throne.
Born to no Pride, inheriting no Strife,
Nor marrying Discord in a noble wife;
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walk'd innoxious thro' his age.
Nor Courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dar'd an Oath, nor hazarded a Lie.[1]
Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
No language, but the language of the heart.
By Nature honest, by Experience wise,
Healthy by temp'rance, and by exercise;
His life, tho' long, to sickness past unknown,
His death was instant, and without a groan.
O grant me thus to live, and thus to die!
Who sprung from Kings shall know less joy than I.
O Friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing Melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing Age,
With lenient arts extend a Mother's breath,
Make Languor smile, and smooth the bed of Death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep a while one parent from the sky!
On cares like these if length of days attend,
May Heav'n, to bless those days, preserve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he serv'd a QUEEN.[2]
A. Whether that blessing be deny'd or giv'n,
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heav'n.

[1] He refused to take the oath of allegiance, or the oath against the Pope.

[2] Dr. Arbuthnot had been physician to Queen Anne.

THE PERIODICAL ESSAY: ADDISON AND STEELE

At the beginning of the eighteenth century many of the shorter forms of writing which to-day find their natural place in the newspapers and magazines had much more difficulty in attaining publication. True, the editorial and the news story might be published as a broadside, and the article would make a pamphlet; but casual pieces like the essay, until the time of Addison and Steele, generally had to be kept until enough of them were accumulated to make a book. The establishment of the *Tatler* in 1709 marks a new era in the history of the essay.

The literary periodical practically came into existence with the *Tatler*. Previous to Steele's venture periodical publications had been little more than news sheets containing information, real or alleged, about current events. In 1704, however, Defoe had begun a *Review* which in addition to news contained, as its title announced, "an entertaining part in every sheet, being advice from the Scandal Club, to the curious, in answer to letters sent for that purpose." The essays which appeared in this second part thus formed a regular feature of his paper, and many of them might easily have been printed in the *Tatler*. In numerous respects Defoe's *Review* was an important forerunner of Steele's paper.

Steele in 1709 was the editor of the official government newspaper, *The London Gazette*. As such he was in a favorable position to obtain news, some of which doubtless he could not use in the *Gazette*. He conceived the idea of publishing a periodical which should combine information about current events with essays on all subjects which polite readers could be expected to take an interest in. The *Tatler* first appeared April 12, 1709, and it continued to come out three times a week for twenty-one months. In form it was merely a single folio sheet printed on both sides. After the first month Addison joined his friend in the undertaking. Gradually the part devoted to news disappeared and the contents, except for a few advertisements at the end, were purely literary. Two months after the *Tatler* was discontinued the first number of the *Spectator* appeared (March 1, 1711). The new paper was wholly literary from the beginning, appeared daily, and each number generally consisted of a single essay. It ran until February 6, 1712, attaining an average circulation of from 1500 to 2000 copies a day.

The essay that was evolved under these conditions is quite different from what it was in the hands of Bacon. It absorbed a number of elements from other forms, including the "character," the "familiar letter," the so-called "table talk," and others. As a result it was a much more varied thing. While in the hands of Addison and Steele it might still at times be the Baconian essay on honor, friendship, modesty,

conversation, it might on other occasions deal with local or temporary things such as the Italian opera, London street-cries, duelling; again it is a didactic tale or an imaginative character portrayed as a model or a warning for the reader; sometimes it is a satirical sketch of contemporary life and manners, sometimes a veiled attack upon a current foible or affectation, sometimes an excursion into literary criticism. The periodical essay contains the germs of several forms that were later to become differentiated, but even to-day the essay shows, in its ability to assume various shapes, its descent from the periodical essay of the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*.

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele were both born in 1672. Their friendship began in the Charterhouse School, was continued at Oxford, and lasted almost till Addison's death. Steele entered the army; Addison went into the civil service, rising to the position of Secretary of State. Steele also wrote a number of plays; Addison wrote a tragedy, *Cato*, and some poetry. Steele's warm-hearted nature and Addison's polish and gentle kindliness are equally revealed in the essays.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672–1719)
RICHARD STEELE (1672–1729)

THE TATLER

Prospectus

[*Tatler, No. 1. Steele. Tuesday, April 12, 1709.*]

Quicquid agunt homines——
nostri est farrago libelli.[1]
—*Juvenal.*

Though the other papers, which are published for the use of the good people of England, have certainly very wholesome effects, and are laudable in their particular kinds, they do not seem to come up to the main design of such narrations, which, I humbly presume, should be principally intended for the use of politic persons, who are so public-spirited as to neglect their own affairs to look into transactions of state. Now these gentlemen, for the most part, being persons of strong zeal, and weak intellects, it is both a charitable and necessary work to offer something, whereby such worthy and well-affected members of the commonwealth may be instructed, after their reading, what to think; which shall be the end and purpose of this my paper, wherein I shall, from time to time, report and consider all matters of what kind soever that shall occur to me, and publish such my advices and reflections every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in the week, for the convenience of the post. I resolve to have something which may be of entertainment to the fair sex, in honor of whom I have invented the title of this paper. I therefore earnestly desire all persons, without distinction, to take it in for the present *gratis*, and hereafter at the price of one penny, forbidding all hawkers to take more for it at their peril. And I desire all persons to consider, that I am at a very great charge for proper materials for this work, as well as that, before I resolved upon it, I had settled a correspondence in all parts of the known and knowing world. And forasmuch as this globe is not trodden upon by mere drudges of business only, but that men of spirit and genius are justly to be esteemed as considerable agents in it, we shall not, upon a dearth of news, present you with musty foreign edicts, and dull proclamations, but shall divide our rela-

[1] Whatever men do is fodder for our booklet.

tion of the passages which occur in action or discourse throughout this town, as well as elsewhere, under such dates of places as may prepare you for the matter you are to expect, in the following manner.

All accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-house; [1] poetry under that of Will's Coffee-house; [1] Learning, under the title of Grecian; [1] foreign and domestic news, you will have from St. James's Coffee-house; [1] and what else I have to offer on any other subject shall be dated from my own Apartment.

I once more desire my reader to consider, that as I cannot keep an ingenious man to go daily to Will's under two-pence each day, merely for his charges; to White's under six-pence; nor to the Grecian, without allowing him some plain Spanish, to be as able as others at the learned table; and that a good observer cannot speak with even Kidney [2] at St. James's without clean linen; I say, these considerations will, I hope, make all persons willing to comply with my humble request (when my *gratis* stock is exhausted) of a penny apiece; especially since they are sure of some proper amusement, and that it is impossible for me to want means to entertain them, having, besides the force of my own parts, the power of divination, and that I can, by casting a figure, tell you all that will happen before it comes to pass.

But this last faculty I shall use very sparingly, and speak but of few things until they are passed, for fear of divulging matters which may offend my superiors.

[1] These chocolate houses and coffee houses were noted for the interest of their patrons in the special matters mentioned. Will's was famous as the resort of men of letters.

[2] A waiter at St. James's coffee house.

COMPANIONS

[*Tatler, No. 45, III. Steele. Saturday, July 23, 1709.*]

From my own Apartment, July 22.

I am got hither safe, but never spent time with so little satisfaction as this evening; for, you must know, I was five hours with three Merry, and two Honest, Fellows. The former sang catches; and the latter even died with laughing at the noise they made.

"Well," says Tom Bellfrey, "you scholars, Mr. Bickerstaff, are the worst company in the world."

"Ay," says his opposite, "you are dull to-night; pr'ythee be merry."

With that I huzzaed and took a jump cross the table, then came clever upon my legs, and fell a-laughing.

"Let Mr. Bickerstaff alone," says one of the Honest Fellows; "when he is in a good humor, he is as good company as any man in England."

He had no sooner spoke but I snatched his hat off his head and clapped it upon my own and burst out a-laughing again; upon which we all fell a-laughing for half an hour. One of the Honest Fellows got behind me in the interim and hit me a sound slap on the back; upon which he got the laugh out of my hands; and it was such a twang on my shoulders that I confess he was much merrier than I. I was half angry; but resolved to keep up the good humor of the company; and after hallooing as loud as I could possibly, I drank off a bumper of claret that made me stare again.

"Nay," says one of the Honest Fellows, "Mr. Isaac is in the right; there is no conversation in this; what signifies jumping, or hitting one another on the back? let us drink about."

We did so from seven of the clock until eleven; and now I am come hither and, after the manner of the wise Pythagoras, begin to reflect upon the passages of the day. I remember nothing but that I am bruised to death; and as it is my way to write down all the good things I have heard in the last conversation, to furnish my paper, I can from this only tell you my sufferings and my bangs.

I named Pythagoras just now, and I protest to you, as he believed men after death entered into other species, I am now and then tempted to think other animals enter into men, and could name several on two legs that never discover any sentiments above what is common with the species of a lower kind; as we see in these bodily wits with whom I was to-night, whose parts consist in strength and activity; but their boisterous mirth gives me great impatience for the return of such happiness as I enjoyed in a conversation last week. Among others in that company we had Florio, who never interrupted any man living when he was speaking; or ever ceased to speak but others lamented that he had done. His discourse ever rises from the fullness of the matter before him and not from ostentation or triumph of his understanding; for though he seldom delivers what he need fear being repeated, he speaks without having that end in view; and his forbearance of calumny or bitterness is owing rather to his good nature than his discretion; for which reason he is esteemed a gentleman perfectly qualified for conversation, in whom a general good will to mankind takes off the necessity of caution and circumspection.

We had at the same time that evening the best sort of companion that can be, a good-natured old man. This person in the company of young men meets with veneration for his benevolence; and is not only valued for the good qualities of which he is master but reaps an acceptance from the pardon he gives to other men's faults: and the ingenuous sort of men with whom he converses have so just a regard for him that he rather is an example than a check to their behavior. For this reason, as Senecio never pretends to be a man of pleasure before youth, so young men never set up for wisdom before Senecio; so that you never meet where he is those monsters of conversation who are grave or gay above their years. He never converses but with followers of nature and good sense, where all that is uttered is only the effect of a communicable temper, and not of emulation to excel their companions; all desire of superiority being a contradiction to that spirit which makes a just conversation, the very essence of which is mutual good will. Hence it is that I take it for a rule that the natural, and not the acquired man, is the companion. Learning, wit, gallantry, and good breeding are all but subordinate qualities in society, and are of no value but as they are subservient to benevolence and tend to a certain manner of being or appearing equal to the rest of the company; for conversation is composed of an assembly of men as they are men and not as they are distinguished by fortune: therefore he who brings his quality with him into conversation should always pay the reckoning; for he came to receive homage and not to meet his friends. But the din about my ears from the clamor of the people I was with this evening has carried me beyond my intended purpose, which was to explain upon the order of merry fellows; but I think I may pronounce of them, as I heard good Senecio, with a spice of the wit of the last age, say, viz., "That a merry fellow is the saddest fellow in the world."

TRAVELERS' MOODS

[*Tatler, No. 192. Addison. Saturday, July 1, 1710*]

Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.[1]
—*Horace.*

From my own Apartment, June 30

Some years since, I was engaged with a coachful of friends to take a journey as far as the Land's End. We were very well pleased with one another the first day; every one endeavoring to recommend himself by his good humor and complaisance to the rest of the company. This good correspondence did not last long; one of our party was soured the very first evening by a plate of butter which had not been melted to his mind and which spoiled his temper to such a degree that he continued upon the fret to the end of our journey. A second fell off from his good humor the next morning, for no other reason that I could imagine but because I chanced to step into the coach before him and place myself on the shady side. This, however, was but my own private guess; for he did not mention a word of it, nor indeed of any thing else for three days following. The rest of our company held out very near half the way, when, on a sudden, Mr. Sprightly fell asleep; and, instead of endeavoring to divert and oblige us, as he had hitherto done, carried himself with an unconcerned, careless, drowsy behavior, until we came to our last stage. There were three of us who still held up our heads and did all we could to make our journey agreeable; but, to my shame be it spoken, about three miles on this side Exeter, I was taken with an unaccountable fit of sullenness, that hung upon me for above threescore miles; whether it were for want of respect, or from an accidental tread upon my foot, or from a foolish maid's calling me "the old gentleman," I cannot tell. In short, there was but one who kept his good humor to the Land's End.

There was another coach that went along with us, in which I likewise observed that there were many secret jealousies, heart-burnings, and animosities: for when we joined companies at night, I could not but take notice that the passengers neglected their own company and studied how to make themselves esteemed by us, who were altogether strangers to them; until at length they grew so well acquainted with us that they liked us as little as they did one another. When I reflect upon this journey, I often fancy it to be a picture of human life, in respect to the several friendships, contracts, and alliances that are made and dissolved in the several periods of it. The most delightful and most lasting engagements are generally those which pass between man and woman; and yet upon what trifles are they weakened or entirely broken! Sometimes the parties fly asunder even in the midst of courtship, and sometimes grow cool in the very honey-month. Some separate before the first child, and some after the fifth; others continue good until thirty, others until forty; while some few, whose souls are of a happier make, and better fitted to one another, travel on together to the end of their journey in a continual intercourse of kind offices, and mutual endearments.

When we therefore choose our companions for life, if we hope to keep both them and ourselves in good humor to the last stage of it, we must be extremely careful in the choice we make, as well as in the conduct on our part. When the persons to whom we join ourselves can stand an examination and bear the scrutiny; when they mend upon our acquaintance with them and discover new

[1] With thee I would gladly live, with thee gladly meet death.

beauties the more we search into their characters; our love will naturally rise in proportion to their perfections.

But because there are very few possessed of such accomplishments of body and mind, we ought to look after those qualifications both in ourselves and others, which are indispensably necessary towards this happy union and which are in the power of every one to acquire, or, at least, to cultivate and improve. These, in my opinion, are cheerfulness and constancy. A cheerful temper, joined with innocence, will make beauty attractive, knowledge delightful, and wit good-natured. It will lighten sickness, poverty, and affliction; convert ignorance into an amiable simplicity; and render deformity itself agreeable.

Constancy is natural to persons of even tempers and uniform dispositions; and may be acquired by those of the greatest fickleness, violence, and passion, who consider seriously the terms of union on which they come together, the mutual interest in which they are engaged, with all the motives that ought to incite their tenderness and compassion toward those who have their dependence upon them and are embarked with them for life in the same state of happiness or misery. Constancy, when it growes in the mind upon considerations of this nature, becomes a moral virtue and a kind of good-nature that is not subject to any change of health, age, fortune, or any of those accidents which are apt to unsettle the best dispositions that are founded rather in constitution than in reason. Where such a constancy as this is wanting, the most inflamed passion may fall away into coldness and indifference, and the most melting tenderness degenerate into hatred and aversion. I shall conclude this paper with a story that is very well known in the north of England.

About thirty years ago, a packet-boat that had several passengers on board was cast away upon a rock and in so great danger of sinking that all who were in it endeavored to save themselves as well as they could; though only those who could swim well had a bare possibility of doing it. Among the passengers there were two women of fashion, who, seeing themselves in such a disconsolate condition, begged for their husbands not to leave them. One of them chose rather to die with his wife than to forsake her; the other, though he was moved with the utmost compassion for his wife, told her, "that for the good of their children, it was better one of them should live than both perish." By a great piece of good luck, next to a miracle, when one of our good men had taken the last and long farewell in order to save himself and the other held in his arms the person that was dearer to him than life, the ship was preserved. It is with a secret sorrow and vexation of mind that I must tell the sequel of the story and let my reader know that this faithful pair who were ready to have died in each other's arms, about three years after their escape, upon some trifling disgust, grew to a coldness at first and at length fell out to such a degree that they left one another and parted forever. The other couple lived together in an uninterrupted friendship and felicity; and, what was remarkable, the husband, whom the shipwreck had like to have separated from his wife, died a few months after her, not being able to survive the loss of her.

I must confess, there is something in the changeableness and inconstancy of human nature that very often both dejects and terrifies me. Whatever I am at present, I tremble to think what I may be. While I find this principle in me, how can I assure myself that I shall be always true to my God, my friend, or myself? In short, without constancy there is neither love, friendship, or virtue, in the world.

THE SPECTATOR

DESCRIPTION OF THE WRITER

[*Spectator, No. 1. Addison. Thursday, March 1, 1710-11*]

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.[1]
—*Horace.*

I have observed, that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author. To gratify this curiosity, which is so natural to a reader, I design this paper and my next, as prefatory discourses to my following writings, and shall give some account in them of the several persons that are engaged in this work. As the chief trouble of compiling, digesting, and correcting will fall to my share, I must do myself the justice to open the work with my own history.

I was born to a small hereditary estate, which, according to the tradition of the village where it lies, was bounded by the same hedges and ditches in William the Conqueror's time that it is at present, and has been delivered down from father to son, whole and entire, without the loss or acquisition of a single field or meadow, during the space of six hundred years. There runs a story in the family, that when my mother was gone with child of me absent three months, she dreamt that she was brought to bed of a judge. Whether this might proceed from a lawsuit which was then depending in the family, or my father's being a justice of the peace, I cannot determine; for I am not so vain as to think it presaged any dignity that I should arrive at in my future life, though that was the interpretation which the neighborhood put upon it. The gravity of my behavior at my very first appearance in the world, and all the time that I sucked, seemed to favor my mother's dream: for, as she has often told me, I threw away my rattle before I was two months old, and would not make use of my coral until they had taken away the bells from it.

As for the rest of my infancy, there being nothing in it remarkable, I shall pass it over in silence. I find, that during my nonage, I had the reputation of a very sullen youth, but was always a favorite of my school-master, who used to say, "that my parts were solid, and would wear well." I had not been long at the university, before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence; for during the space of eight years, excepting in the public exercises of the college, I scarce uttered the quantity of an hundred words; and indeed do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life. Whilst I was in this learned body, I applied myself with so much diligence to my studies, that there are very few celebrated books, either in the learned or the modern tongues, which I am not acquainted with.

Upon the death of my father, I was resolved to travel into foreign countries, and therefore left the university, with the character of an odd unaccountable fellow, that had a great deal of learning, if I would but show it. An insatiable thirst after knowledge carried me into all the countries of Europe, in which there was anything new or strange to be seen; nay, to such a degree was my curiosity raised, that having read the controversies of some great men concerning the antiquities of Egypt, I made a voyage to Grand Cairo, on purpose to take the measure of a

[1] He thinks not how to give you smoke from light,
But light from smoke, that he may draw his bright
Wonders forth after.
(Tr. Ben Johnson)

pyramid: and as soon as I had set myself right in that particular, returned to my native country with great satisfaction.

I have passed my latter years in this city, where I am frequently seen in most public places, though there are not above half a dozen of my select friends that know me; of whom my next paper shall give a more particular account. There is no place of general resort wherein I do not often make my appearance; sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a round of politicians at Will's, and listening with great attention to the narratives that are made in those little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at Child's, and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the *Postman*, overhear the conversation of every table in the room. I appear on Sunday nights at St. James's coffee-house, and sometimes join the little committee of politics in the inner-room, as one who comes there to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa-tree, and in the theaters both of Drury-lane and the Hay-market. I have been taken for a merchant upon the exchange for above these ten years, and sometimes pass for a Jew in the assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's.[1] In short, wherever I see a cluster of people, I always mix with them, though I never open my lips but in my own club.

Thus I live in the world rather as a Spectator of mankind, than as one of the species; by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artisan, without ever meddling with any practical part in life. I am very well versed in the theory of a husband, or a father, and can discern the errors in the economy, business, and diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as standers-by discover blots,[2] which are apt to escape those who are in the game. I never espoused any party with violence, and am resolved to observe an exact neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the hostilities of either side. In short, I have acted in all the parts of my life as a looker on, which is the character I intend to preserve in this paper.

I have given the reader just so much of my history and character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the business I have undertaken. As for other particulars in my life and adventures, I shall insert them in following papers, as I shall see occasion. In the meantime, when I consider how much I have seen, read, and heard, I begin to blame my own taciturnity; and since I have neither time nor inclination to communicate the fullness of my heart in speech, I am resolved to do it in writing, and to print myself out, if possible, before I die. I have been often told by my friends, that it is pity so many useful discoveries which I have made should be in the possession of a silent man. For this reason, therefore, I shall publish a sheetful of thoughts every morning, for the benefit of my contemporaries; and if I can any way contribute to the diversion or improvement of the country in which I live, I shall leave it when I am summoned out of it, with the secret satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived in vain.

There are three very material points which I have not spoken to in this paper, and which, for several important reasons, I must keep to myself, at least for some time: I mean, an account of my name, my age, and my lodgings. I must confess, I would gratify my reader in anything that is reasonable; but as for these three particulars, though I am sensible

[1] This coffee house was the special resort of stock-brokers and business men.

[2] Exposed pieces in backgammon.

they might tend very much to the embellishment of my paper, I cannot yet come to a resolution of communicating them to the public. They would indeed draw me out of that obscurity which I have enjoyed for many years, and expose me in public places to several salutes and civilities, which have been always very disagreeable to me; for the greatest pain I can suffer, is the being talked to, and being stared at. It is for this reason likewise, that I keep my complexion and dress as very great secrets; though it is not impossible but I may make discoveries of both in the progress of the work I have undertaken.

After having been thus particular upon myself, I shall in to-morrow's paper give an account of those gentlemen who are concerned with me in this work. For, as I have before intimated, a plan of it is laid and concerted (as all other matters of importance are) in a club. However, as my friends have engaged me to stand in the front, those who have a mind to correspond with me, may direct their letters to the *Spectator*, at Mr. Buckley's,[1] in Little Britain.[2] For I must further acquaint the reader, that though our club meets only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we have appointed a committee to sit every night for the inspection of all such papers as may contribute to the advancement of the public weal.

THE SPECTATOR CLUB

[*Spectator, No. 2. Steele. Friday, March 2, 1710-11*]

——————— Haec alii sex,
Et plures, uno conclamant ore—[3]
—*Juvenal.*

The first of our society is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of an ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley.[4] His great grandfather was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behavior, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humor creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho-square.[5] It is said, he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester [6] and Sir George Etherege,[7] fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked Bully Dawson [8] in a public coffee-house for calling him "youngster." But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humors, he tells us, has been in and out [9] twelve times since he first wore it. 'Tis said Sir Roger grew humble in his desires after he forgot this cruel beauty, insomuch that it is reported he has frequently offended in point of chas-

[1] The first publisher of the *Spectator*.
[2] A street in London.
[3] Six others and more shout this with one accord.
[4] The characters in this paper are, of course, imaginary.
[5] A fashionable district in Steele's day.
[6] Noted as a wit (reign of Charles II)
[7] Dramatist of the same period.
[8] A sharper and swaggerer.
[9] *i.e.*, of fashion

tity with beggars and gipsies. But this is looked upon by his friends rather as a matter of raillery than truth. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behavior, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess to love him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house, he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way up stairs to a visit. I must not omit, that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum; [1] that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause, by explaining a passage in the game-act.[2]

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple,[3] a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humorsome father, than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton [4] or Coke.[4] The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage-articles, leases, and tenures, in the neighborhood, all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully,[5] but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool; but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable. As few of his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste of books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play [6] is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New-Inn,[7] crosses through Russel-court, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose.[8] It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in the city of London; a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man) he calls the sea the British Common. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry. He will often argue, that if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove, that diligence makes

[1] peace
[2] Law regulating the keeping of fire arms and game preserves.
[3] One of the four Inns of Court (the law schools).
[4] Sir Thomas Littleton (1402-1481) was the author of a work on land tenures which, as revised by Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634), was long the standard book on real property.
[5] Cicero.
[6] Six o'clock.
[7] In the Middle Temple.
[8] Tavern adjoining the Drury Lane Theatre.

more lasting acquisitions than valor, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, among which the greatest favorite is, "A penny saved is a penny got." A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself; and says that England may be richer than other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though at the same time I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the club-room sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament, that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get the better of modesty. When he has talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world, because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty and an even regular behavior, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds, who endeavor at the same end with himself, the favor of a commander. He will however in his way of talk excuse generals, for not disposing according to men's desert, or inquiring into it; For, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me, has as many to break through to come at me, as I have to come at him: therefore he will conclude, that the man who would make a figure, especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candor does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him; nor even too obsequious, from an habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humorists,[1] unacquainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have amongst us the gallant Will Honeycomb; a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life; but having ever been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but a very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces on his brain. His person is well turned, and of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits[2] as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French king's wenches our wives and daughters had this manner of

[1] eccentric persons [2] dress

curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods; whose frailty was covered by such a sort of petticoat, and whose vanity to show her foot made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge has been in the female world. As other men of his age will take notice to you[1] what such a minister said upon such and such an occasion, he will tell you, when the duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance, or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present lord Such-a-one. If you speak of a young Commoner that said a lively thing in the house, he starts up, "He has good blood in his veins; Tom Mirabell begot him; the rogue cheated me in that affair; that young fellow's mother used me more like a dog than any woman I ever made advances to." This way of talking of his, very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man, who is usually called a well-bred fine gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him, whom I am next to speak of, as one of our company; for he visits us but seldom, but when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of himself. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to; he is therefore among divines what a chamber-counselor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years, that he observes when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interests in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

[1] remind you

THE PURPOSE OF THE SPECTATOR

[*Spectator, No. 10. Addison. Monday, March 12, 1710-11.*]

Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit,
Atque illum præceps prono rapit alveus amni.[2]
—*Virgil.*

It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these my papers, and receiving my morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day: so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster, who, I hope, will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agree-

[2] So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And, slow advancing, struggle with the stream:
But, if they slack their hands, or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive.
(Tr. Dryden)

able, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavor to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermittent starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates that he brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea tables and in coffee houses.

I would, therefore, in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter, and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes that a well-written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think that where the *Spectator* appears, the other public prints will vanish, but shall leave it to my reader's consideration whether, Is it not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self than to hear what passes in Muscovy or Poland, and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds and make enmities irreconcilable?

In the next place, I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies! I mean the fraternity of spectators who live in the world without having anything to do in it, and either by the affluence of their fortunes or laziness of their dispositions have no other business with the rest of mankind but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the Royal Society, Templars that are not given to be contentious, and statesmen that are out of business; in short, everyone that considers the world as a theater and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas till the business and conversation of the day has supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with whether there was any news stirring; and by that means gathering together materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of till about twelve a clock in the morning; for by that time they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and do promise them that I will daily instill into them such sound and wholesome sentiments as shall

have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve-hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them rather as they are women than as they are reasonable creatures; and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of a more elevated life and conversation that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavor to make an innocent, if not an improving, entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces in human nature, I shall endeavor to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments, of the sex. In the meanwhile I hope these my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day on this paper, since they may do it without any hindrance to business.

I know several of my friends and well wishers are in great pain for me, lest I should not be able to keep up the spirit of a paper which I oblige myself to furnish every day; but to make them easy in this particular, I will promise them faithfully to give it over as soon as I grow dull. This I know will be matter of great raillery to the small wits; who will frequently put me in mind of my promise, desire me to keep my word, assure me that it is high time to give over, with many other little pleasantries of the like nature, which men of a little smart genius cannot forbear throwing out against their best friends, when they have such a handle given them of being witty. But let them remember that I do hereby enter my caveat against this piece of raillery.

SATIRE

[*Spectator, No. 34. Addison. Monday, April 9, 1711.*]

Cognatis maculis similis fera[1] Parcit
——
—*Juvenal.*

The club of which I am a member, is very luckily composed of such persons as are engaged in different ways of life, and deputed as it were out of the most conspicuous classes of mankind. By this means I am furnished with the greatest variety of hints and materials, and know everything that passes in the different quarters and divisions, not only of this great city, but of the whole kingdom. My readers too have the satisfaction to find that there is no rank or degree among them who have not their representative in this club, and that there is always somebody present who will take care of

[1] Every wild beast spares its own kind.

their representative interests, that nothing may be written or published to the prejudice or infringement of their just rights and privileges.

I last night sat very late in company with this select body of friends, who entertained me with several remarks which they and others had made upon these my speculations, as also with the various success which they had met with among their several ranks and degrees of readers. Will Honeycomb told me, in the softest manner he could, that there were some ladies (but for your comfort, says Will, they are not those of the most wit) that were offended at the liberties I had taken with the opera and the puppet-show; that some of them were likewise very much surprised, that I should think such serious points as the dress and equipage of persons of quality, proper subjects for raillery.

He was going on, when Sir Andrew Freeport took him up short, and told him that the papers he hinted at, had done great good in the city, and that all their wives and daughters were the better for them; and further added, that the whole city thought themselves very much obliged to me for declaring my generous intentions to scourge vice and folly as they appear in a multitude, without condescending to be a publisher of particular intrigues and cuckoldoms. "In short," says Sir Andrew, "if you avoid that foolish beaten road of falling upon aldermen and citizens, and employ your pen upon the vanity and luxury of courts, your paper must needs be of general use."

Upon this my friend the Templar [1] told Sir Andrew, that he wondered to hear a man of his sense talk after that manner; that the city had always been the province for satire; and that the wits of King Charles's time jested upon nothing else during his whole reign. He then showed, by the examples of Horace, Juvenal, Boileau, and the best writers of every age, that the follies of the stage and court had never been accounted too sacred for ridicule, how great soever the persons might be that patronized them. "But after all," says he, "I think your raillery has made too great an excursion, in attacking several persons of the inns of court; and I do not believe you can show me any precedent for your behavior in that particular."

My good friend Sir Roger de Coverley, who had said nothing all this while, began his speech with a Pish! and told us that he wondered to see so many men of sense so very serious upon fooleries. "Let our good friend," says he, "attack every one that deserves it; I would only advise you, Mr. Spectator," applying himself to me, "to take care how you meddle with country squires. They are the ornaments of the English nation; men of good heads and sound bodies! and, let me tell you, some of them take it ill of you, that you mention fox-hunters with so little respect."

Captain Sentry spoke very sparingly on this occasion. What he said was only to commend my prudence in not touching upon the army, and advised me to continue to act discreetly in that point.

By this time I found every subject of my speculations was taken away from me, by one or other of the club: and began to think myself in the condition of the good man that had one wife who took a dislike to his gray hairs, and another to his black, till by their picking out what each of them had an aversion to, they left his head altogether bald and naked.

While I was thus musing with myself, my worthy friend the clergyman, who, very luckily for me, was at the club that night, undertook my cause. He told us, that he wondered any order of persons should think themselves too considerable

[1] Member of the Inner Temple. See *Spectator*, No. 2.

to be advised; that it was not quality, but innocence, which exempted men from reproof; that vice and folly ought to be attacked wherever they could be met with, and especially when they were placed in high and conspicuous stations of life. He further added, that my paper would only serve to aggravate the pains of poverty, if it chiefly exposed those who are already depressed, and in some measure turned into ridicule, by the meanness of their conditions and circumstances. He afterward proceeded to take notice of the great use this paper might be of to the public, by reprehending those vices which are too trivial for the chastisement of the law, and too fantastical for the cognizance of the pulpit. He then advised me to prosecute my undertaking with cheerfulness, and assured me, that whoever might be displeased with me, I should be approved by all those whose praises do honor to the persons on whom they are bestowed.

The whole club pay a particular deference to the discourse of this gentleman, and are drawn into what he says, as much by the candid ingenuous manner with which he delivers himself, as by the strength of argument and force of reason which he makes use of. Will Honeycomb immediately agreed that what he had said was right; and that, for his part, he would not insist upon the quarter which he had demanded for the ladies. Sir Andrew gave up the city with the same frankness. The Templar would not stand out, and was followed by Sir Roger and the Captain; who all agreed that I should be at liberty to carry the war into what quarter I pleased; provided I continued to combat with criminals in a body, and to assault the vice without hurting the person.

This debate, which was held for the good of mankind, put me in mind of that which the Roman triumvirate were formerly engaged in for their destruction. Every man at first stood hard for his friend, till they found that by this means they should spoil their proscription; and at length, making a sacrifice of all their acquaintance and relations, furnished out a very decent execution.

Having thus taken my resolutions to march on boldly in the cause of virtue and good sense, and to annoy their adversaries in whatever degree or rank of men they may be found; I shall be deaf for the future to all the remonstrances that shall be made to me on this account. If Punch [1] grows extravagant, I shall reprimand him very freely: if the stage becomes a nursery of folly and impertinence, I shall not be afraid to animadvert upon it. In short, if I meet with anything in city, court, or country, that shocks modesty or good manners, I shall use my utmost endeavors to make an example of it. I must, however, entreat every particular person who does me the honor to be a reader of this paper never to think himself, or any one of his friends, or enemies, aimed at in what is said: for I promise him, never to draw a faulty character which does not fit at least a thousand people; or to publish a single paper, that is not written in the spirit of benevolence, and with a love of mankind.

THE BALLAD OF CHEVY CHASE

[*Spectator, No. 70. Addison. Monday, May 21, 1711.*]

Interdum vulgus rectum videt.[2]—*Horace.*

When I traveled, I took a particular delight in hearing the songs and fables that are come from father to son and are most in vogue among the common people

[1] In Punch and Judy.
[2] Now and then the view of the common people is right.

of the countries through which I passed; for it is impossible that any thing should be universally tasted and approved by a multitude, though they are only the rabble of a nation, which hath not in it some peculiar aptness to please and gratify the mind of man. Human nature is the same in all reasonable creatures; and whatever falls in with it will meet with admirers amongst readers of all qualities and conditions. Moliere, as we are told by Monsieur Boileau, used to read all his comedies to an old woman who was his housekeeper, as she sat with him at her work by the chimney corner; and could foretell the success of his play in the theater from the reception it met at his fireside. For he tells us the audience always followed the old woman and never failed to laugh in the same place.

I know nothing which more shows the essential and inherent perfection of simplicity of thought, above that which I call the Gothic manner in writing, than this, that the first pleases all kinds of palates, and the latter only such as have formed to themselves a wrong, artificial taste upon little fanciful authors and writers of epigram. Homer, Virgil, or Milton, so far as the language of their poems is understood, will please a reader of plain common sense, who would neither relish nor comprehend an epigram of Martial or a poem of Cowley. So, on the contrary, an ordinary song or ballad that is the delight of the common people cannot fail to please all such readers as are not unqualified for the entertainment by their affectation or ignorance; and the reason is plain, because the same paintings of nature which recommend it to the most ordinary reader will appear beautiful to the most refined.

The old song of Chevy Chase [1] is the favorite ballad of the common people of England; and Ben Jonson used to say he had rather have been the author of it than of all his works. Sir Philip Sidney in his Discourse of Poetry speaks of it in the following words: "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas, that I found not my heart more moved than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung by some blind crowder [2] with no rougher voice than rude style; which being so evil appareled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivil age, what would it work trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?" For my own part, I am so professed an admirer of this antiquated song that I shall give my reader a critic upon it without any further apology for so doing.

The greatest modern critics have laid it down as a rule that an heroic poem should be founded upon some important precept of morality, adapted to the constitution of the country in which the poet writes. Homer and Virgil have formed their plans in this view. As Greece was a collection of many governments who suffered very much among themselves and gave the Persian emperor, who was their common enemy, many advantages over them by their mutual jealousies and animosities, Homer, in order to establish among them an union, which was so necessary for their safety, grounds his poem upon the discords of the several Grecian princes who were engaged in a confederacy against an Asiatic prince, and the several advantages which the enemy gained by such their discords. At the time the poem we are now treating of was written, the dissensions of the barons, who were then so many petty princes, ran very high, whether they quarreled among themselves, or with their neighbors, and produced unspeakable calamities to the country: The poet, to deter men from such unnatural contentions, describes a bloody battle and dreadful scene

[1] Printed above, p. 125.

[2] fiddler

of death, occasioned by the mutual feuds which reigned in the families of an English and Scotch nobleman. That he designed this for the instruction of his poem, we may learn from his four last lines, in which, after the example of the modern tragedians, he draws from it a precept for the benefit of his readers.

God save the King, and bless the land
In plenty, joy, and peace;
And grant henceforth that foul debate
'Twixt noblemen may cease.

The next point observed by the greatest heroic poets hath been to celebrate persons and actions which do honor to their country: thus Virgil's hero was the founder of Rome, Homer's a prince of Greece; and for this reason Valerius Flaccus and Statius, who were both Romans, might be justly derided for having chosen the expedition of the Golden Fleece, and the Wars of Thebes, for the subjects of their epic writings.

The poet before us has not only found out an hero in his own country, but raises the reputation of it by several beautiful incidents. The English are the first who take the field, and the last who quit it. The English bring only fifteen hundred to the battle, the Scotch, two thousand. The English keep the field with fifty-three: The Scotch retire with fifty-five: all the rest on each side being slain in battle. But the most remarkable circumstance of this kind, is the different manner in which the Scotch and English kings receive the news of this fight, and of the great men's deaths who commanded in it.

This news was brought to Edinburgh,
Where Scotland's King did reign,
That brave Earl Douglas suddenly
Was with an arrow slain.

O heavy news, King James did say,
Scotland can witness be,
I have not any captain more
Of such account as he.

Like tidings to King Henry came
Within as short a space,
That Percy of Northumberland
Was slain in Chevy Chase.

Now God be with him, said our King,
Sith 'twill no better be,
I trust I have within my realm
Five hundred as good as he.

Yet shall not Scot nor Scotland say
But I will vengeance take,
And be revenged on them all
For brave Lord Percy's sake.

This vow full well the King perform'd
After on Humble-down,
In one day fifty knights were slain
With lords of great renown.

And of the rest of small account
Did many thousands die, &c.

At the same time that our poet shows a laudable partiality to his countrymen, he represents the Scots after a manner not unbecoming so bold and brave a people.

Earl Douglas on a milk-white steed,
Most like a baron bold,
Rode foremost of the company,
Whose armor shone like gold.

His sentiments and actions are every way suitable to an hero. One of us two, says he, must die; I am an earl as well as yourself, so that you can have no pretense for refusing the combat: however, says he, 'tis pity, and indeed would be a sin, that so many innocent men should perish for our sakes; rather let you and I end our quarrel in single fight.

E'er thus I will out-braved be,
One of us two shall die;
I know thee well, an Earl thou art,
Lord Percy, so am I.

But trust me, Percy, pity it were,
And great offense, to kill
Any of these our harmless men,
For they have done no ill.

Let thou and I the battle try,
And set our men aside;
Accurst be he, Lord Percy said,
By whom this is deny'd.

When these brave men had distinguished themselves in the battle and in single combat with each other, in the midst of a generous parley, full of heroic sentiments, the Scotch earl falls; and with his dying words encourages his men to revenge his death, representing to them, as the most bitter circumstance of it, that his rival saw him fall.

With that there came an arrow keen
Out of an English bow,
Which struck Earl Douglas to the heart
A deep and deadly blow.

Who never spoke more words than these,
Fight on my merry men all,
For why, my life is at an end,
Lord Percy sees my fall.

Merry men, in the language of those times, is no more than a cheerful word for companions and fellow soldiers. A passage in the eleventh book of Virgil's *Æneids* is very much to be admired, where Camilla in her last agonies, instead of weeping over the wound she had received, as one might have expected from a warrior of her sex, considers only (like the hero of whom we are now speaking) how the battle should be continued after her death.

Tum sic expirans, &c.
A gathering mist o'erclouds her cheerful eyes;
And from her cheeks the rosy color flies,
Then, turns to her, whom, of her female train
She trusted most, and thus she speaks with pain.
Acca, 'tis past! He swims before my sight,
Inexorable death; and claims his right.
Bear my last words to Turnus, fly with speed,
And bid him timely to my charge succeed:
Repel the Trojans, and the town relieve:
Farewell.——

Turnus did not die in so heroic a manner; though our poet seems to have had his eye upon Turnus's speech in the last verse.

Lord Percy sees my fall.
——Vicisti, et victum tendere palmas
Ausonii videre——.[1]

[1] You have conquered, and the Ausonians have seen me, vanquished, hold out my palms.

Earl Percy's lamentation over his enemy is generous, beautiful, and passionate; I must only caution the reader not to let the simplicity of the style, which one may well pardon in so old a poet, prejudice him against the greatness of the thought.

Then, leaving life, Earl Percy took
The dead man by the hand,
And said, Earl Douglas for thy life
Would I had lost my land.

O Christ! My very heart doth bleed
With sorrow for thy sake;
For sure a more renowned knight
Mischance did never take.

That beautiful line *Taking the dead man by the hand,* will put the reader in mind of Æneas's behavior toward Lausus, whom he himself had slain as he came to the rescue of his aged father.

At vero ut vultum vidit morientis, et ora,
Ora modis Anchisiades pallentia miris,
Ingemuit, miserans graviter, dextramque tetendit, &c.

The pious prince beheld young Lausus dead;
He griev'd, he wept; then grasp'd his hand, and said,
Poor hapless Youth! What praises can be paid
To worth so great—— ——!

I shall take another opportunity to consider the other parts of this old song.

A FUTURE HISTORIAN'S VIEW

[*Spectator, No. 101. Addison. Tuesday, June 26, 1711*]

Romulus et Liber pater et cum Castore Pollux,
Post ingentia facta deorum in templa recepti,
Dum terras hominumque colunt genus, aspera bella
Componunt, agros assignant, oppida condunt:
Ploravere suis non respondere favorem
Speratum meritis.[2]

—*Horace*

[2] Bacchus, and Romulus, and Leda's twins,
Though after death they were adored as gods,
Yet, while they lived, and strove to serve mankind,
Destructive wars composed, and cities built,
And planted colonies; with grief complained,
Instead of grateful thanks and praise deserved,
They met with calumny and foul reproach.
(Tr. Duncombe)

Censure, says a late ingenious author, is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent. It is a folly for an eminent man to think of escaping it, and a weakness to be affected with it. All the illustrious persons of antiquity, and indeed of every age in the world, have passed through this fiery persecution. There is no defense against reproach but obscurity; it is a kind of concomitant to greatness, as satires and invectives were an essential part of a Roman triumph.

If men of eminence are exposed to censure on one hand, they are as much liable to flattery on the other. If they receive reproaches which are not due to them, they likewise receive praises which they do not deserve. In a word, the man in a high post is never regarded with an indifferent eye, but always considered as a friend or an enemy. For this reason, persons in great stations have seldom their true characters drawn till several years after their deaths. Their personal friendships and enmities must cease, and the parties they were engaged in be at an end, before their faults or their virtues can have justice done them. When writers have the least opportunity of knowing the truth, they are in the best disposition to tell it.

It is therefore the privilege of posterity to adjust the characters of illustrious persons, and to set matters right between those antagonists who by their rivalry for greatness divided a whole age into factions. We can now allow Cæsar to be a great man, without derogating from Pompey; and celebrate the virtues of Cato, without detracting from those of Cæsar. Every one that has been long dead has a due proportion of praise allotted him, in which whilst he lived his friends were too profuse and his enemies too sparing.

According to Sir Isaac Newton's calculations, the last comet that made its appearance in 1680 imbibed so much heat by its approaches to the sun that it would have been two thousand times hotter than red hot iron, had it been a globe of that metal; and that supposing it as big as the earth, and at the same distance from the sun, it would be fifty thousand years in cooling, before it recovered its natural temper. In the like manner, if an Englishman considers the great ferment into which our political world is thrown at present, and how intensely it is heated in all its parts, he cannot suppose that will cool again in less than three hundred years. In such a tract of time, it is possible that the heats of the present age may be extinguished, and our several classes of great men represented under their proper characters. Some eminent historian may then probably arise that will not write *recentibus odiis*[1] (as Tacitus expresses it), with the passions and prejudices of a contemporary author, but make an impartial distribution of fame among the great men of the present age.

I cannot forbear entertaining myself very often with the idea of such an imaginary historian describing the reign of Anne the First, and introducing it with a preface to his reader, that he is now entering upon the most shining part of the English story. The great rivals in fame will be then distinguished according to their respective merits, and shine in their proper points of light. Such an one (says the historian), though variously represented by the writers of his own age, appears to have been a man of more than ordinary abilities, great application, and uncommon integrity: Nor was such an one (though of an opposite party and interest) inferior to him in any of these respects. The several antagonists, who now endeavor to depreciate one another, and are celebrated or traduced by different parties, will then have the same body of admirers, and appear illustrious in the

[1] with recent hatreds

opinion of the whole British nation. The deserving man, who can now recommend himself to the esteem of but half his countrymen, will then receive the approbations and applauses of a whole age.

Among the several persons that flourish in this glorious reign, there is no question but such a future historian as the person of whom I am speaking will make mention of the men of genius and learning, who have now any figure in the British nation. For my own part, I often flatter myself with the honorable mention which will then be made of me; and have drawn up a paragraph in my own imagination, that I fancy will not be altogether unlike what will be found in some page or other of this imaginary historian.

It was under this reign, says he, that the *Spectator* published those little diurnal essays which are still extant. We know very little of the name or person of this author, except only that he was a man of a very short face, extremely addicted to silence, and so great a lover of knowledge that he made a voyage to Grand Cairo for no other reason but to take the measure of a pyramid. His chief friend was one Sir Roger de Coverley, a whimsical country knight, and a Templar whose name he has not transmitted to us. He lived as a lodger at the house of a widow woman, and was a great humorist in all parts of his life. This is all we can affirm with any certainty of his person and character. As for his speculations, notwithstanding the several obsolete words and obscure phrases of the age in which he lived, we still understand enough of them to see the diversions and characters of the English nation in his time: Not but that we are to make allowance for the mirth and humor of the author, who has doubtless strained many representations of things beyond the truth. For if we interpret his words in their literal meaning, we must suppose that women of the first quality used to pass away whole mornings at a puppet show: That they attested their principles by their patches: That an audience would sit out an evening to hear a dramatical performance written in a language which they did not understand: That chairs and flower pots were introduced as actors upon the British stage: That a promiscuous assembly of men and women were allowed to meet at midnight in masks within the verge of the court; with many improbabilities of the like nature. We must, therefore, in these and the like cases, suppose that these remote hints and allusions aimed at some certain follies which were then in vogue, and which at present we have not any notion of. We may guess by several passages in the speculations that there were writers who endeavored to detract from the works of this author; but as nothing of this nature is come down to us, we cannot guess at any objections that could be made to his paper. If we consider his style with that indulgence which we must show to old English writers, or if we look into the variety of his subjects, with those several critical dissertations, moral reflections.

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The following part of the paragraph is so much to my advantage, and beyond any thing I can pretend to, that I hope my reader will excuse me for not inserting it.

THE FAN DRILL

[*Spectator, No. 102. Addison. Wednesday, June 27, 1711.*]

——Lusus animo debent aliquando dari,
Ad cogitandum melior ut redeat sibi.[1]
—*Phædrus.*

I do not know whether to call the following letter a satire upon coquettes or

[1] Diversion should sometimes be given to the mind, that it may be better for thinking when it returns to itself.

a representation of their several fantastical accomplishments, or what other title to give it; but as it is I shall communicate it to the public. It will sufficiently explain its own intentions, so that I shall give it my reader at length, without preface or postscript.

"Mr. Spectator,

"Women are armed with fans as men with swords, and sometimes do more execution with them: To the end therefore that ladies may be entire mistresses of the weapon which they bear, I have erected an academy for the training up of young women in the exercise of the fan, according to the most fashionable airs and motions that are now practiced at court. The ladies who carry fans under me are drawn up twice a day in my great hall, where they are instructed in the use of their arms, and exercised by the following words of command,

Handle your Fans,
Unfurl your Fans,
Discharge your Fans,
Ground your Fans,
Recover your Fans,
Flutter your Fans.

By the right observation of these few plain words of command, a woman of a tolerable genius who will apply herself diligently to her exercise for the space of but one-half year shall be able to give her fan all the graces that can possibly enter into that little modish machine.

"But to the end that my readers may form to themselves a right notion of this exercise, I beg leave to explain it to them in all its parts. When my female regiment is drawn up in array, with every one her weapon in her hand, upon my giving the word to handle their fans, each of them shakes her fan at me with a smile, then gives her right-hand woman a tap upon the shoulder, then presses her lips with the extremity of her fan, then lets her arms fall in an easy motion, and stands in a readiness to receive the next word of command. All this is done with a close fan, and is generally learned in the first week.

"The next motion is that of unfurling the fan, in which are comprehended several little flirts and vibrations, as also gradual and deliberate openings, with many voluntary fallings asunder in the fan itself, that are seldom learned under a month's practice. This part of the exercise pleases the spectators more than any other, as it discovers on a sudden an infinite number of cupids, garlands, altars, birds, beasts, rainbows, and the like agreeable figures, that display themselves to view, whilst every one in the regiment holds a picture in her hand.

"Upon my giving the word to discharge their fans, they give one general crack that may be heard at a considerable distance when the wind sits fair. This is one of the most difficult parts of the exercise; but I have several ladies with me, who at their first entrance could not give a pop loud enough to be heard at the further end of a room, who can now discharge a fan in such a manner that it shall make a report like a pocket pistol. I have likewise taken care (in order to hinder young women from letting off their fans in wrong places or unsuitable occasions) to show upon what subject the crack of a fan may come in properly: I have likewise invented a fan, with which a girl of sixteen, by the help of a little wind, which is enclosed about one of the largest sticks, can make as loud a crack as a woman of fifty with an ordinary fan.

"When the fans are thus discharged, the word of command in course is to ground their fans. This teaches a lady to quit her fan gracefully when she throws it aside in order to take up a pack of cards, adjust a curl of hair, replace a falling pin, or apply herself to any other matter of importance. This

part of the exercise, as it only consists in tossing a fan with an air upon a long table (which stands by for that purpose), may be learned in two days' time as well as in a twelvemonth.

"When my female regiment is thus disarmed, I generally let them walk about the room for some time; when, on a sudden (like ladies that look upon their watches after a long visit), they all of them hasten to their arms, catch them up in a hurry, and place themselves in their proper stations upon my calling out, 'Recover yours fans.' This part of the exercise is not difficult, provided a woman applies her thoughts to it.

"The fluttering of the fan is the last, and indeed the masterpiece, of the whole exercise; but if a lady does not misspend her time, she may make herself mistress of it in three months. I generally lay aside the dog days and the hot time of the summer for the teaching this part of the exercise; for as soon as ever I pronounce 'Flutter your fans,' the place is filled with so many zephyrs and gentle breezes as are very refreshing in that season of the year, though they might be dangerous to ladies of a tender constitution in any other.

"There is an infinite variety of motions to be made use of in the flutter of a fan: There is the angry flutter, the modest flutter, the timorous flutter, the confused flutter, the merry flutter, and the amorous flutter. Not to be tedious, there is scarce any emotion in the mind which does not produce a suitable agitation in the fan; insomuch, that if I only see the fan of a disciplined lady, I know very well whether she laughs, frowns, or blushes. I have seen a fan so very angry that it would have been dangerous for the absent lover who provoked it to have come within the wind of it; and at other times so very languishing that I have been glad for the lady's sake the lover was at a sufficient distance from it. I need not add that a fan is either a prude or coquette, according to the nature of the person who bears it. To conclude my letter, I must acquaint you that I have from my own observations compiled a little treatise for the use of my own scholars, entitled *The Passions of the Fan;* which I will communicate to you, if you think it may be of use to the public. I shall have a general review on Thursday next, to which you shall be very welcome if you will honor it with your presence,

"I am, &c.

"P. S. I teach young gentlemen the whole art of gallanting a fan.

"N. B. I have several little plain fans made for this use, to avoid expense."

SIR ROGER AT CHURCH

[*Spectator, No. 112. Addison. Monday, July 9, 1711.*]

Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεούς, νόμῳ ὡς διάκειται, Τίμα.[1]

—*Pythagoras.*

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of

[1] First then honor the immortal gods, as it is ordained in the law.

religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the 'Change, the whole parish-politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common-prayer-book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the Psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing Psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces "Amen" three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner, which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behavior; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side: and every now and then inquires how such a one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechizing day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church-service, has promised upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir

Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the squire; and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

THE TRUNK-MAKER

[*Spectator, No. 235. Addison. Thursday, November 29, 1711.*]

—— Populares
Vincentem strepitus——.[1]
—*Horace.*

There is nothing which lies more within the province of a spectator than public shows and diversions; and as among these there are none which can pretend to vie with those elegant entertainments that are exhibited in our theaters, I think it particularly incumbent on me to take notice of everything that is remarkable in such numerous and refined assemblies.

It is observed that, of late years, there has been a certain person in the upper gallery of the playhouse, who, when he is pleased with anything that is acted upon the stage, expresses his approbation by a loud knock upon the benches or the wainscot, which may be heard over the whole theater. This person is commonly known by the name of the Trunk-maker in the Upper Gallery. Whether it be that the blow he gives on these occasions resembles that which is often heard in the shops of such artisans, or that he was supposed to have been a real trunk-maker, who after the finishing of his day's work, used to unbend his mind at these public diversions with his hammer in his hand, I cannot certainly tell. There are some, I know, who have been foolish enough to imagine it is a spirit which haunts the upper gallery, and from time to time makes those strange noises; and the rather, because he is observed to be louder than ordinary every time the ghost of Hamlet appears. Others have reported that it is a dumb man, who has chosen this way of uttering himself, when he is transported with anything he sees or hears. Others will have it to be the playhouse thunderer, that exerts himself after this manner in the upper gallery, when he has nothing to do upon the roof.

But having made it my business to get the best information I could in a matter of this moment, I find that the Trunk-maker, as he is commonly called, is a large black man, whom nobody knows. He generally leans forward on a huge oaken plant with great attention to everything that passes upon the stage. He is never seen to smile; but upon hearing anything that pleases him, he takes up

[1] Winning the noisy approval of the people.

his staff with both hands, and lays it upon the next piece of timber that stands in his way with exceeding vehemence: After which he composes himself in his former posture, till such time as something new sets him again at work.

It has been observed his blow is so well timed that the most judicious critic could never except against it. As soon as any shining thought is expressed in the poet, or any uncommon grace appears in the actor, he smites the bench or wainscot. If the audience does not concur with him, he smites a second time; and if the audience is not yet awaked, looks round him with great wrath, and repeats the blow a third time, which never fails to produce the clap. He sometimes lets the audience begin the clap of themselves, and at the conclusion of their applause ratifies it with a single thwack.

He is of so great use to the playhouse that it is said a former director of it, upon his not being able to pay his attendance by reason of sickness, kept one in pay to officiate for him till such time as he recovered; but the person so employed, though he laid about him with incredible violence, did it in such wrong places, that the audience soon found out it was not their old friend the Trunk-maker.

It has been remarked that he has not yet exerted himself with vigor this season. He sometimes plies at the opera; and upon Nicolini's first appearance, was said to have demolished three benches in the fury of his applause. He has broken half a dozen oaken plants upon Doggett, and seldom goes away from a tragedy of Shakespeare without leaving the wainscot extremely shattered.

The players do not only connive at this his obstreperous approbation, but very cheerfully repair at their own cost whatever damages he makes. They had once a thought of erecting a kind of wooden anvil for his use, that should be made of a very sounding plank, in order to render his strokes more deep and mellow; but as this might not have been distinguished from the music of a kettledrum, the project was laid aside.

In the meanwhile I cannot but take notice of the great use it is to an audience that a person should thus preside over their heads, like the director of a concert, in order to awaken their attention, and beat time to their applauses. Or to raise my simile, I have sometimes fancied the Trunk-maker in the Upper Gallery to be like Virgil's Ruler of the Winds, seated upon the top of a mountain, who, when he struck his scepter upon the side of it, roused an hurricane, and set the whole cavern in an uproar.

It is certain the Trunk-maker has saved many a good play, and brought many a graceful actor into reputation, who would not otherwise have been taken notice of. It is very visible, as the audience is not a little abashed, if they find themselves betrayed into a clap, when their friend in the upper gallery does not come into it; so the actors do not value themselves upon the clap, but regard it as a mere *brutum fulmen*, or empty noise, when it has not the sound of the oaken plant in it. I know it has been given out by those who are enemies to the Trunk-maker that he has sometimes been bribed to be in the interest of a bad poet, or a vicious player; but this is a surmise, which has no foundation; his strokes are always just, and his admonitions seasonable; he does not deal about his blows at random, but always hits the right nail upon the head. The inexpressible force wherewith he lays them on, sufficiently shows the evidence and strength of his conviction. His zeal for a good author is indeed outrageous, and breaks down every force and partition, every board and plank, that stands within the expression of his applause.

As I do not care for terminating my thoughts in barren speculations, or in reports of pure matter of fact, without drawing something from them for the advantage of my countrymen, I shall take the liberty to make an humble proposal, that whenever the Trunk-maker shall depart this life, or whenever he shall have lost the spring of his arm by sickness, old age, infirmity, or the like, some able-bodied critic should be advanced to this post, and have a competent salary settled on him for life, to be furnished with bamboos for operas, crabtree-cudgels for comedies, and oaken plants for tragedy, at the public expense. And to the end that this place should always be disposed of according to merit, I would have none preferred to it who has not given convincing proofs, both of a sound judgment and a strong arm, and who could not, upon occasion, either knock down an ox or write a comment upon Horace's *Art of Poetry*. In short, I would have him a due composition of Hercules and Apollo, and so rightly qualified for this important office that the Trunk-maker may not be missed by our posterity.

A BEAU'S HEAD

[*Spectator, No. 275. Addison. Tuesday, January 15, 1711-12.*]

——tribus Anticyris caput insanabile.[1]
—*Juvenal.*

I was yesterday engaged in an assembly of virtuosos, where one of them produced many curious observations, which he had lately made in the anatomy of an human body. Another of the company communicated to us several wonderful discoveries, which he had also made on the same subject, by the help of very fine glasses. This gave birth to a great variety of uncommon remarks, and furnished discourse for the remaining part of the day.

The different opinions which were started on this occasion presented to my imagination so many new ideas that, by mixing with those which were already there, they employed my fancy all the last night, and composed a very wild extravagant dream.

I was invited, methought, to the dissection of a beau's head, and of a coquette's heart, which were both of them laid on a table before us. An imaginary operator opened the first with a great deal of nicety, which, upon a cursory and superficial view, appeared like the head of another man; but, upon applying our glasses to it, we made a very odd discovery, namely, that what we looked upon as brains, were not such in reality, but an heap of strange materials wound up in that shape and texture, and packed together with wonderful art in the several cavities of the skull. For, as Homer tells us that the blood of the gods is not real blood, but only something like it; so we found that the brain of a beau is not real brain but only something like it.

The pineal gland,[2] which many of our modern philosophers suppose to be the seat of the soul, smelt very strong of essence and orange-flower water, and was encompassed with a kind of horny substance, cut into a thousand little faces or mirrors, which were imperceptible to the naked eye; insomuch that the soul, if there had been any here, must have been always taken up in contemplating her own beauties.

We observed a large antrum or cavity in the sinciput,[3] that was filled with ribbons, lace, and embroidery, wrought together in a most curious piece of network, the parts of which were likewise imperceptible to the naked eye. Another of these antrums or cavities was stuffed

[1] A head [whose insanity is] incurable by a triple dose of hellebore [from Anticyra].

[2] part of brain [3] top of head

with invisible billets-doux, love-letters, pricked dances,[1] and other trumpery of the same nature. In another we found a kind of powder, which set the whole company a sneezing, and by the scent discovered itself to be right Spanish. The several other cells were stored with commodities of the same kind, of which it would be tedious to give the reader an exact inventory.

There was a large cavity on each side of the head, which I must not omit. That on the right side was filled with fictions, flatteries, and falsehoods, vows, promises, and protestations; that on the left with oaths and imprecations. There issued out a duct from each of these cells, which ran into the root of the tongue, where both joined together, and passed forward in one common duct to the tip of it. We discovered several little roads or canals running from the ear into the brain, and took particular care to trace them out through their several passages. One of them extended itself to a bundle of sonnets and little musical instruments. Others ended in several bladders which were filled either with wind or froth. But the large canal entered into a great cavity of the skull, from whence there went another canal into the tongue. This great cavity was filled with a kind of spongy substance, which the French anatomists call *galimatias,* and the English nonsense.

The skins of the forehead were extremely tough and thick, and, what very much surprised us, had not in them any single blood-vessel that we were able to discover, either with or without our glasses; from whence we concluded that the party when alive must have been entirely deprived of the faculty of blushing.

The *os cribriforme*[2] was exceedingly stuffed, and in some places damaged with snuff. We could not but take notice in particular of that small muscle which is not often discovered in dissections, and draws the nose upwards, when it expresses the contempt which the owner of it has, upon seeing anything he does not like, or hearing anything he does not understand. I need not tell my learned reader, this is that muscle which performs the motion so often mentioned by the Latin poets, when they talk of a man's cocking his nose, or playing the rhinoceros.

We did not find anything very remarkable in the eye, saving only that the *musculi amatorii,* or as we may translate it into English, the ogling muscles, were very much worn and decayed with use; whereas on the contrary, the elevator or the muscle which turns the eye towards heaven did not appear to have been used at all.

I have only mentioned in this dissection such new discoveries as we were able to make, and have not taken any notice of those parts which are to be met with in common heads. As for the skull, the face, and indeed the whole outward shape and figure of the head, we could not discover any difference from what we observe in the heads of other men. We were informed that the person to whom this head belonged, had passed for a man above five and thirty years, during which time he eat[3] and drank like other people, dressed well, talked loud, laughed frequently, and on particular occasions had acquitted himself tolerably at a ball or an assembly, to which one of the company added that a certain knot of ladies took him for a wit. He was cut off in the flower of his age, by the blow of a paring shovel, having been surprised by an eminent citizen, as he was tendering some civilities to his wife.

When we had thoroughly examined this head with all its apartments, and in sev-

[1] dances to set music(?) [2] sieve-like bone [3] ate

eral kinds of furniture, we put up the brain, such as it was, into its proper place, and laid it aside under a broad piece of scarlet cloth, in order to be prepared, and kept in a great repository of dissections, our operator telling us that the preparation would not be so difficult as that of another brain, for that he had observed several of the little pipes and tubes which ran through the brain were already filled with a kind of mercurial substance, which he looked upon to be true quicksilver.

He applied himself in the next place to the coquette's heart, which he likewise laid open with great dexterity. There occurred to us many particularities in this dissection; but, being unwilling to burden my reader's memory too much, I shall reserve this subject for the speculation of another day.

A COQUETTE'S HEART

[*Spectator, No. 281. Addison. Tuesday, January 22, 1711-12.*]

Pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.[1]
—*Virgil.*

Having already given an account of the dissection of a beau's head, with the several discoveries made on that occasion, I shall here, according to my promise, enter upon the dissection of a coquette's heart, and communicate to the public such particularities as we observed in that curious piece of anatomy.

I should perhaps have waived this undertaking, had not I been put in mind of my promise by several of my unknown correspondents, who are very importunate with me to make an example of the coquette, as I have already done of the beau. It is, therefore, in compliance with the request of friends that I have looked over the minutes of my former dream, in order to give the public an exact relation of it, which I shall enter upon without further preface.

Our operator, before he engaged in this visionary dissection, told us that there was nothing in his art more difficult than to lay open the heart of a coquette, by reason of the many labyrinths and recesses which are to be found in it, and which do not appear in the heart of any other animal.

He desired us first of all to observe the pericardium, or outward case of the heart, which we did very attentively; and by the help of our glasses discerned in it millions of little scars, which seemed to have been occasioned by the points of innumerable darts and arrows, that from time to time had glanced upon the outward coat; though we could not discover the smallest orifice by which any of them had entered and pierced the inward substance.

Every smatterer in anatomy knows that this pericardium, or case of the heart, contains in it a thin reddish liquor, supposed to be bred from the vapors which exhale out of the heart, and being stopped here, are condensed into this watery substance. Upon examining this liquor, we found that it had in it all the qualities of that spirit which is made use of in the thermometer to show the change of weather.

Nor must I here omit an experiment one of the company assured us he himself had made with this liquor, which he found in great quantity about the heart of a coquette whom he had formerly dissected. He affirmed to us that he had actually enclosed it in a small tube made after the manner of a weather-glass; but that, instead of acquainting him with the variations of the atmosphere, it showed him the qualities of those persons who

[1] And anxiously the panting entrails views. (Tr. Dryden)

entered the room where it stood. He affirmed also that it rose at the approach of a plume of feathers, an embroidered coat, or a pair of fringed gloves; and that it fell as soon as an ill-shaped periwig, a clumsy pair of shoes, or an unfashionable coat came into his house: nay, he proceeded so far as to assure us that upon his laughing aloud when he stood by it, the liquor mounted very sensibly, and immediately sunk again upon his looking serious. In short, he told us that he knew very well by this invention whenever he had a man of sense or a coxcomb in his room.

Having cleared away the pericardium, or the case and liquor above-mentioned, we came to the heart itself. The outward surface of it was extremely slippery, and the mucro, or point, so very cold withal that, upon endeavoring to take hold of it, it glided through the fingers like a smooth piece of ice.

The fibers were turned and twisted in a more intricate and perplexed manner than they are usually found in other hearts; insomuch, that the whole heart was wound up together like a Gordian knot, and must have had very irregular and unequal motions, whilst it was employed in its vital function.

One thing we thought very observable, namely, that upon examining all the vessels which came into it or issued out of it, we could not discover any communication that it had with the tongue.

We could not but take notice, likewise, that several of those little nerves in the heart which are affected by the sentiments of love, hatred, and other passions, did not descend to this before us from the brain, but from the muscles which lie about the eye.

Upon weighing the heart in my hand, I found it to be extremely light, and consequently very hollow; which I did not wonder at when, upon looking into the inside of it, I saw multitudes of cells and cavities running one within another, as our historians describe the apartments of Rosamond's Bower.[1] Several of these little hollows were stuffed with innumerable sorts of trifles, which I shall forbear giving any particular account of, and shall therefore only take notice of what lay first and uppermost, which upon our unfolding it and applying our microscope to it appeared to be a flame-colored hood.

We were informed that the lady of this heart, when living, received the addresses of several who made love to her, and did not only give each of them encouragement, but made everyone she conversed with believe that she regarded him with an eye of kindness; for which reason we expected to have seen the impression of multitudes of faces among the several plates and foldings of the heart, but to our great surprise not a single print of this nature discovered itself till we came into the very core and center of it. We there observed a little figure, which, upon applying our glasses to it, appeared dressed in a very fantastic manner. The more I looked upon it, the more I thought I had seen the face before, but could not possibly recollect either the place or time; when at length one of the company, who had examined this figure more nicely than the rest, showed us plainly by the make of its face, and the several turns of its features, that the little idol that was thus lodged in the middle of the heart was the deceased beau, whose head I gave some account of in my last Tuesday's paper.

As soon as we had finished our dissection, we resolved to make an experiment of the heart, not being able to determine among ourselves the nature of its substance, which differed in so many particulars from that of the heart in other females. Accordingly we laid it into a pan of burning coals, when we

[1] Bower of Henry II's favorite, Rosamond Clifford.

observed in it a certain salamandrine quality, that made it capable of living in the midst of fire and flame, without being consumed, or so much as singed.

As we were admiring this strange phenomenon, and standing round the heart in a circle, it gave a most prodigious sigh, or rather crack, and dispersed all at once in smoke and vapor. This imaginary noise, which methought was louder than the burst of a cannon, produced such a violent shake in my brain, that it dissipated the fumes of sleep, and left me in an instant broad awake.

PAPER AND PRINTING

[*Spectator, No. 367. Addison. Thursday, May 1, 1712.*]

Perituræ parcere chartæ.[1]
—*Juvenal.*

I have often pleased myself with considering the two kinds of benefits which accrue to the public from these my speculations, and which, were I to speak after the manner of logicians, I would distinguish into the material and the formal. By the latter I understand those advantages which my readers receive, as their minds are either improved or delighted by these my daily labors; but having already several times descanted on my endeavors in this light, I shall at present wholly confine myself to the consideration of the former. By the word *material* I mean those benefits which arise to the public from these my speculations, as they consume a considerable quantity of our paper manufacture, employ our artisans in printing, and find business for great numbers of indigent persons.

Our paper manufacture takes into it several mean materials which could be put to no other use, and affords work for several hands in the collecting of them which are incapable of any other employment. Those poor retailers, whom we see so busy in every street, deliver in their respective gleanings to the merchant. The merchant carries them in loads to the paper mill, where they pass through a fresh set of hands, and give life to another trade. Those who have mills on their estates by this means considerably raise their rents, and the whole nation is in a great measure supplied with a manufacture for which formerly she was obliged to her neighbors.

The materials are no sooner wrought into paper but they are distributed among the presses, where they again set innumerable artists at work, and furnish business to another mystery.[2] From hence, accordingly as they are stained with news or politics, they fly through the town in *Postmen, Post-boys, Daily Courants, Reviews, Medleys,* and *Examiners.* Men, women, and children contend who shall be the first bearers of them, and get their daily sustenance by spreading them. In short, when I trace in my mind a bundle of rags to a quire of *Spectators,* I find so many hands employed in every step they take through their whole progress that while I am writing a *Spectator* I fancy myself providing bread for a multitude.

If I do not take care to obviate[3] some of my witty readers, they will be apt to tell me that my paper, after it is thus printed and published, is still beneficial to the public on several occasions. I must confess I have lighted my pipe with my own works for this twelve-month past: my landlady often sends up her little daughter to desire some of my old *Spectators,* and has frequently told me that the paper they are printed on is the best in the world to wrap spice in. They like-

[1] [It is foolish for me] to spare the paper that others will spoil.

[2] craft, trade

[3] forestall

wise make a good foundation for a mutton pie, as I have more than once experienced, and were very much sought for last Christmas by the whole neighborhood.

It is pleasant enough to consider the changes that a linen fragment undergoes by passing through the several hands above mentioned. The finest pieces of holland, when worn to tatters, assume a new whiteness more beautiful than their first, and often return in the shape of letters to their native country. A lady's shift [1] may be metamorphosed into billets-doux, and come into her possession a second time. A beau may peruse his cravat after it is worn out, with greater pleasure and advantage than ever he did in a glass. In a word, a piece of cloth, after having officiated for some years as a towel or a napkin, may by this means be raised from a dunghill, and become the most valuable piece of furniture in a prince's cabinet.

The politest nations of Europe have endeavored to vie with one another for the reputation of the finest printing. Absolute governments, as well as republics, have encouraged an art which seems to be the noblest and most beneficial that was ever invented among the sons of men. The present King of France, in his pursuits after glory, has particularly distinguished himself by the promoting of this useful art, insomuch that several books have been printed in the Louvre at his own expense, upon which he sets so great a value that he considers them as the noblest presents he can make to foreign princes and ambassadors. If we look into the commonwealths of Holland and Venice, we shall find that in this particular they have made themselves the envy of the greatest monarchies. Elzever and Aldus [2] are more frequently mentioned than any pensioner of the one or doge of the other.

The several presses which are now in England, and the great encouragement which has been given to learning for some years last past, has made our own nation as glorious upon this account as for its late triumphs and conquests. The new edition which is given us of Cæsar's Commentaries [3] has already been taken notice of in foreign Gazettes, and is a work that does honor to the English press. It is no wonder that an edition should be very correct which has passed through the hands of one of the most accurate, learned, and judicious writers this age has produced. The beauty of the paper, of the character, and of the several cuts with which this noble work is illustrated, makes it the finest book that I have ever seen; and is a true instance of the English genius, which, though it does not come the first into any art, generally carries it to greater heights than any other country in the world. I am particularly glad that this author comes from a British printing house in so great a magnificence, as he is the first who has given us any tolerable account of our country.

My illiterate readers, if any such there are, will be surprised to hear me talk of learning as the glory of a nation, and of printing as an art that gains a reputation to a people among whom it flourishes. When men's thoughts are taken up with avarice and ambition, they cannot look upon anything as great or valuable which does not bring with it an extraordinary power or interest to the person who is concerned in it. But as I shall never sink this paper so far as to engage with Goths and Vandals, I shall only regard such kind of reasoners with that pity which is due to so deplorable a degree of stupidity and ignorance.

[1] undergarment

[2] Elzevir, Dutch family of printers famous in the seventeenth century; Aldus, sixteenth century family of printers in Venice.

[3] Published by Jacob Tonson, a friend of Addison's.

PROSE SATIRE: GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

SATIRE is a matter of mood or spirit in literature rather than a matter of form. It is the mood of an author who holds up to ridicule the faults or follies in human behavior; the purpose may be, and often is, to effect needed reforms but the weapon used is always ridicule. The tone may vary from the playful comedy of Jane Austen's exposures of "whims and inconsistencies" in her novels, through the rollicking humor tinged with moral indignation of Burns's poetic attacks upon hypocrisy, to the contempt for man and the world that Swift expressed in his bitterest moments.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), master satirist, was one of the group of brilliant prose writers, including Addison, Steele, and Defoe, that illuminated English literature during the early part of the eighteenth century. There was at the time an intense interest in politics as in manners and other social questions, and, although Swift did not seek controversy, he became involved in the disputes that raged between different factions. His rather gloomy boyhood was passed in Kilkenny, an Irish town in which the religious feuds between Roman Catholics and Protestants resulted in two separate town governments. He later became Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, but was keenly alive to the political strife of his time. He was strong willed, honest in his convictions, and blunt in expressing them. Naturally sarcastic and bitter, he had the power to wound sharply, and to leave a sting.

In writing *Gulliver's Travels* (published 1726, though begun much earlier), Swift made use of a familiar type of narrative, the *voyage imaginaire,* well adapted to political satire. A character makes a journey to an imaginary country and describes what he sees there, suggesting, of course, a contrast between that land and England. Lilliput was the first of four countries visited by Lemuel Gulliver, who tells the story of his experiences. It represents England as a land of pitiably insignificant human beings, filled with envy, jealousy, and love of intrigue. Swift wrote, as he said, "to vex the world, not to divert it." He grew interested in the details of his narrative, however, so that it is possible to read it for the story's own sake, unmindful of the attacks intended upon courts and public officials. Like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe,* published a few years earlier, it affords a splendid illustration of the effectiveness of clear, straightforward prose in making the imaginary seem real.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667–1745)

GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER

The author of these Travels, Mr. Lemuel Gulliver, is my ancient and intimate friend; there is likewise some relation between us by the mother's side. About three years ago, Mr. Gulliver growing weary of the concourse of curious people coming to him at his house near Redriff, made a small purchase of land, with a convenient house, near Newark in Nottinghamshire, his native country, where he now lives retired, yet in good esteem among his neighbors.

Although Mr. Gulliver was born in Nottinghamshire, where his father dwelt, yet I have heard him say his family came from Oxfordshire; to confirm which, I have observed in the churchyard at Banbury, in that county, several tombs and monuments of the Gullivers.

Before he quitted Redriff, he left the custody of the following papers in my hands, with the liberty to dispose of them as I should think fit. I have carefully perused them three times: the style is very plain and simple; and the only fault I find is, that the author, after the manner of travelers, is a little too circumstantial. There is an air of truth apparent through the whole; and indeed the author was so distinguished for his veracity, that it became a sort of proverb among his neighbors at Redriff, when any one affirmed a thing, to say it was as true as if Mr. Gulliver had spoke it.

By the advice of several worthy persons, to whom, with the author's permission, I communicated these papers, I now venture to send them into the world, hoping they may be at least, for some time, a better entertainment to our young noblemen, than the common scribbles of politics and party.

This volume would have been at least twice as large, if I had not made bold to strike out innumerable passages relating to the winds and tides, as well as to the variations and bearings in the several voyages; together with the minute descriptions of the management of the ship in storms, in the style of sailors: likewise the account of the longitudes and latitudes; wherein I have reason to apprehend that Mr. Gulliver may be a little dissatisfied: but I was resolved to fit the work as much as possible to the general capacity of readers. However, if my own ignorance in sea-affairs shall have led me to commit some mistakes, I alone am answerable for them: and if any traveler hath a curiosity to see the whole work at large, as it came from the hand of the author, I will be ready to gratify him.

As for any further particulars relating to the author, the reader will receive satisfaction from the first pages of the book.

RICHARD SYMPSON.

PART I

A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT [1]

CHAPTER I

The Author gives some account of himself and family, his first inducements to travel. He is shipwrecked, and swims for his life, gets safe on shore in the country of Lilliput, is made a prisoner, and is carried up country.

[1] The main features of the satire can be easily grasped. Lilliput (*i.e.* little fellow) is England, and Blefuscu is France. Swift's intention was to attack Walpole (here called Flimnap) and his Whig ministry under George I. The "High Heels" are the Tories and the "Low Heels" the Whigs. Gulliver's flight to Blefuscu symbolizes the impeachment of Oxford, the flight of Bolingbroke to France on the accession of George, and the banishment of Atterbury, who likewise retired to France. The dispute between the Big-Endians and the Little-Endians (chap. IV) refers to the controversies between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. Individual points will be noted below, but analogies with actual conditions should not be pushed too far.

My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge, at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies; but the charge of maintaining me (although I had a very scanty allowance) being too great for a narrow fortune, I was bound apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with whom I continued four years; and my father now and then sending me small sums of money, I laid them out in learning navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be some time or other my fortune to do. When I left Mr. Bates, I went down to my father; where, by the assistance of him and my uncle John, and some other relations, I got forty pounds, and a promise of thirty pounds a year to maintain me at Leyden: there I studied physic two years and seven months, knowing it would be useful in long voyages.

Soon after my return from Leyden, I was recommended by my good master, Mr. Bates, to be surgeon to the *Swallow*, Captain Abraham Pannell, commander; with whom I continued three years and a half, making a voyage or two into the Levant, and some other parts. When I came back I resolved to settle in London; to which Mr. Bates, my master, encouraged me, and by him I was recommended to several patients. I took part of a small house in the Old Jewry; and being advised to alter my condition, I married Mrs. Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr. Edmund Burton, hosier, in Newgate Street, with whom I received four hundred pounds for a portion.

But my good master Bates dying in two years after, and I having few friends, my business began to fail; for my conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad practice of too many among my brethren. Having therefore consulted with my wife, and some of my acquaintance, I determined to go again to sea. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West Indies, by which I got some addition to my fortune. My hours of leisure I spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern, being always provided with a good number of books; and when I was ashore, in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning their language; wherein I had a great facility, by the strength of my memory.

The last of these voyages not proving very fortunate, I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I removed from the Old Jewry to Fetter Lane, and from thence to Wapping, hoping to get business among the sailors; but it would not turn to account. After three years' expectation that things would mend, I accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the *Antelope*, who was making a voyage to the South Sea. We set sail from Bristol, May 4, 1699, and our voyage at first was very prosperous.

It would not be proper, for some reasons, to trouble the reader with the particulars of our adventures in those seas: let it suffice to inform him, that in our passage from thence to the East Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the northwest of Van Diemen's Land.[1] By an observation, we found ourselves in the latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south. Twelve of our crew were dead by immoderate labor and ill food; the rest were in a very weak condition. On the 5th of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the weather being very hazy, the seamen spied a rock within half a cable's length of the ship; but the

[1] Tasmania. Swift is careful not to give the longitude.

wind was so strong that we were driven directly upon it, and immediately split. Six of the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the boat into the sea, made a shift to get clear of the ship and rock. We rowed, by my computation, about three leagues, till we were able to work no longer, being already spent with labor while we were in the ship. We therefore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was overset by a sudden flurry from the north. What became of my companions in the boat, as well as of those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom: but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; and by this time the storm was much abated. The declivity was so small, that I walked near a mile before I got to the shore, which I conjectured was about eight o'clock in the evening. I then advanced forward near half a mile, but could not discover any sign of houses or inhabitants; at least I was in so weak a condition that I did not observe them. I was extremely tired, and with that, and the heat of the weather, and about half a pint of brandy that I drank as I left the ship, I found myself much inclined to sleep. I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder than ever I remembered to have done in my life, and, as I reckoned, about nine hours; for when I awaked, it was just daylight. I attempted to rise, but was not able to stir; for, as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ligatures across my body, from my armpits to my thighs. I could only look upwards; the sun began to grow hot, and the light offended my eyes. I heard a confused noise about me, but, in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which, advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when, bending my eyes downward as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back. In the mean time, I felt at least forty more of the same kind (as I conjectured) following the first. I was in the utmost astonishment, and roared so loud that they all ran back in a fright; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, were hurt with the falls they got by leaping from my sides upon the ground. However, they soon returned, and one of them, who ventured so far as to get a full sight of my face, lifting up his hands and eyes by way of admiration, cried out in a shrill but distinct voice, *Hekinah degul!* The others repeated the same words several times, but then I knew not what they meant. I lay all this while, as the reader may believe, in great uneasiness; at length, struggling to get loose, I had the fortune to break the strings, and wrench out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground; for, by lifting it up to my face, I discovered the methods they had taken to bind me, and at the same time with a violent pull, which gave me excessive pain, I a little loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was just able to turn my head about two inches. But the creatures ran off a second time, before I could seize them; whereupon there was a great shout in a very shrill accent, and after it ceased, I heard one of them cry aloud, *Tolgo phonac;* when in an instant I felt above

an hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and besides, they shot another flight into the air, as we do bombs in Europe, whereof many, I suppose, fell on my body (though I felt them not), and some on my face, which I immediately covered with my left hand. When this shower of arrows was over, I fell a groaning with grief and pain, and then striving again to get loose, they discharged another volley larger than the first, and some of them attempted with spears to stick me in the sides; but, by good luck, I had on a buff jerkin, which they could not pierce. I thought it the most prudent method to lie still, and my design was to continue so till night, when, my left hand being already loose, I could easily free myself: and as for the inhabitants, I had reason to believe I might be a match for the greatest armies they could bring against me, if they were all of the same size with him that I saw. But fortune disposed otherwise of me. When the people observed I was quiet, they discharged no more arrows; but, by the noise I heard, I knew their numbers increased; and about four yards from me, over against my right ear, I heard a knocking for above an hour, like that of people at work; when turning my head that way, as well as the pegs and strings would permit me, I saw a stage erected about a foot and a half from the ground, capable of holding four of the inhabitants, with two or three ladders to mount it: from whence one of them, who seemed to be a person of quality, made me a long speech, whereof I understood not one syllable. But I should have mentioned, that before the principal person began his oration, he cried out three times, *Langro dehul san* (these words and the former were afterwards repeated and explained to me). Whereupon, immediately about fifty of the inhabitants came and cut the strings that fastened the left side of my head, which gave me the liberty of turning it to the right, and of observing the person and gesture of him that was to speak. He appeared to be of a middle age, and taller than any of the other three who attended him, whereof one was a page that held up his train, and seemed to be somewhat longer than my middle finger; the other two stood one on each side to support him. He acted every part of an orator, and I could observe many periods of threatenings, and others of promises, pity, and kindness. I answered in a few words, but in the most submissive manner, lifting up my left hand and both my eyes to the sun, as calling him for a witness; and being almost famished with hunger, having not eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship, I found the demands of nature so strong upon me that I could not forbear showing my impatience (perhaps against the strict rules of decency) by putting my finger frequently on my mouth, to signify that I wanted food. The *hurgo* (for so they call a great lord, as I afterwards learnt) understood me very well. He descended from the stage, and commanded that several ladders should be applied to my sides, on which above an hundred of the inhabitants mounted, and walked towards my mouth, laden with baskets full of meat, which had been provided and sent thither by the king's orders, upon the first intelligence he received of me. I observed there was the flesh of several animals, but could not distinguish them by the taste. There were shoulders, legs and loins, shaped like those of mutton, and very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I eat[1] them by two or three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time, about the bigness of musket bullets. They supplied me as fast as they

[1] ate

could, showing a thousand marks of wonder and astonishment at my bulk and appetite. I then made another sign that I wanted drink. They found by my eating that a small quantity would not suffice me; and being a most ingenious people, they slung up, with great dexterity, one of their largest hogsheads, then rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top; I drank it off at a draught, which I might well do, for it did not hold half a pint, and tasted like a small wine of Burgundy, but much more delicious. They brought me a second hogshead, which I drank in the same manner, and made signs for more, but they had none to give me. When I had performed these wonders they shouted for joy, and danced upon my breast, repeating several times as they did at first, *Hekinah degul*. They made me a sign that I should throw down the two hogsheads, but first warning the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, *Borach mevola;* and when they saw the vessels in the air, there was an universal shout of *Hekinah degul*. I confess I was often tempted, while they were passing backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground. But the remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do, and the promise of honor I made them—for so I interpreted my submissive behavior—soon drove out these imaginations. Besides, I now considered myself as bound by the laws of hospitality to a people who had treated me with so much expense and magnificence. However, in my thoughts I could not sufficiently wonder at the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals, who durst venture to mount and walk upon my body while one of my hands was at liberty, without trembling at the very sight of so prodigious a creature as I must appear to them. After some time, when they observed that I made no more demands for meat, there appeared before me a person of high rank from his imperial majesty. His excellency, having mounted on the small of my right leg, advanced forwards up to my face, with about a dozen of his retinue, and producing his credentials under the signet royal, which he applied close to my eyes, spoke about ten minutes without any signs of anger, but with a kind of determinate resolution; often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant, whither it was agreed by his majesty in council that I must be conveyed. I answered in few words, but to no purpose, and made a sign with my hand that was loose, putting it to the other (but over his excellency's head for fear of hurting him or his train) and then to my own head and body, to signify that I desired my liberty. It appeared that he understood me well enough, for he shook his head by way of disapprobation, and held his hand in a posture to show that I must be carried as a prisoner. However, he made other signs, to let me understand that I should have meat and drink enough, and very good treatment. Whereupon I once more thought of attempting to break my bonds; but again, when I felt the smart of their arrows upon my face and hands, which were all in blisters, and many of the darts still sticking in them, and observing likewise that the number of my enemies increased, I gave tokens to let them know that they might do with me what they pleased. Upon this the *hurgo* and his train withdrew, with much civility and cheerful countenances. Soon after I heard a general shout, with frequent repetitions of the words, *Peplom selan*, and I felt great numbers of people on my left side relaxing the cords to such a degree that I was able to turn upon my right. . . .

But before this they had daubed my face and both my hands with a sort of ointment, very pleasant to the smell, which in a few minutes removed all the smart of their arrows. These circumstances, added to the refreshment I had received by their victuals and drink, which were very nourishing, disposed me to sleep. I slept about eight hours, as I was afterwards assured; and it was no wonder, for the physicians, by the emperor's order, had mingled a sleepy potion in the hogsheads of wine.

It seems that upon the first moment I was discovered sleeping on the ground, after my landing, the emperor had early notice of it by an express, and determined in council that I should be tied in the manner I have related (which was done in the night, while I slept), that plenty of meat and drink should be sent to me, and a machine prepared to carry me to the capital city.

This resolution perhaps may appear very bold and dangerous, and I am confident would not be imitated by any prince in Europe on the like occasion; however, in my opinion, it was extremely prudent, as well as generous: for supposing these people had endeavored to kill me with their spears and arrows while I was asleep, I should certainly have awaked with the first sense of smart, which might so far have roused my rage and strength as to have enabled me to break the strings wherewith I was tied; after which, as they were not able to make resistance, so they could expect no mercy.

These people are most excellent mathematicians, and arrived to a great perfection in mechanics, by the countenance and encouragement of the emperor, who is a renowned patron of learning. This prince hath several machines fixed on wheels, for the carriage of trees and other great weights. He often builds his largest men-of-war, whereof some are nine feet long, in the woods where the timber grows, and has them carried on these engines three or four hundred yards to the sea. Five hundred carpenters and engineers were immediately set at work to prepare the greatest engine they had. It was a frame of wood raised three inches from the ground, about seven foot long and four wide, moving upon twenty-two wheels. The shout I heard was upon the arrival of this engine, which, it seems, set out in four hours after my landing. It was brought parallel to me, as I lay. But the principal difficulty was to raise and place me in this vehicle. Eighty poles, each of one foot high, were erected for this purpose, and very strong cords, of the bigness of packthread, were fastened by hooks to many bandages, which the workmen had girt round my neck, my hands, my body, and my legs. Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to draw up these cords, by many pulleys fastened on the poles and thus, in less than three hours, I was raised and slung into the engine, and there tied fast. All this I was told, for, while the whole operation was performing, I lay in a profound sleep, by the force of that soporiferous medicine infused into my liquor. Fifteen hundred of the emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, were employed to draw me towards the metropolis, which, as I said, was half a mile distant.

About four hours after we began our journey, I awaked by a very ridiculous accident; for the carriage being stopped awhile, to adjust something that was out of order, two or three of the young natives had the curiosity to see how I looked when I was asleep; they climbed up into the engine, and advancing very softly to my face, one of them, an officer in the guards, put the sharp end of his halfpike a good way up into my left nostril, which tickled my nose like a straw, and

made me sneeze violently: whereupon they stole off unperceived, and it was three weeks before I knew the cause of my waking so suddenly. We made a long march the remaining part of that day, and rested at night with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir.[1] The next morning at sunrise we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon. The emperor, and all his court, came out to meet us; but his great officers would by no means suffer his Majesty to endanger his person by mounting on my body.

At the place where the carriage stopped there stood an ancient temple, esteemed to be the largest in the whole kingdom; which, having been polluted some years before by an unnatural murder, was, according to the zeal of those people, looked on as profane, and therefore had been applied to common uses, and all the ornaments and furniture carried away. In this edifice it was determined I should lodge. The great gate, fronting to the north, was about four foot high and almost two foot wide, through which I could easily creep. On each side of the gate was a small window, not above six inches from the ground: into that on the left side the king's smiths conveyed fourscore and eleven chains, like those that hang to a lady's watch in Europe, and almost as large, which were locked to my left leg with six-and-thirty padlocks. Over against this temple, on t' other side of the great highway, at twenty foot distance, there was a turret at least five foot high. Here the emperor ascended, with many principal lords of his court, to have an opportunity of viewing me, as I was told, for I could not see them. It was reckoned that above an hundred thousand inhabitants came out of the town upon the same errand; and in spite of my guards, I believe there could not be fewer than ten thousand, at several times, who mounted my body by the help of ladders. But a proclamation was soon issued, to forbid it upon pain of death. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up, with as melancholy a disposition as ever I had in my life. But the noise and astonishment of the people, at seeing me rise and walk, are not to be expressed. The chains that held my left leg were about two yards long, and gave me not only the liberty of walking backwards and forwards in a semicircle, but, being fixed within four inches of the gate, allowed me to creep in, and lie at my full length in the temple.

[1] The caution of the Lilliputians is probably aimed at the extreme solicitude of the Whigs to protect the king against Jacobite plots.

CHAPTER II

The Emperor of Lilliput, attended by several of the nobility, comes to see the Author in his confinement. The Emperor's person and habit described. Learned men appointed to teach the Author their language. He gains favor by his mild disposition. His pockets are searched, and his sword and pistols taken from him.

When I found myself on my feet, I looked about me, and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country round appeared like a continued garden, and in the enclosed fields, which were generally forty foot square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods of half a *stang*,[2] and the tallest trees, as

[2] perch, here square perch (about 30 sq. ft.)

I could judge, appeared to be seven foot high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scene of a city in a theater. . . .

The Emperor was already descended from the tower, and advancing on horseback towards me, which had like to have cost him dear; for the beast, though very well trained, yet wholly unused to such a sight, which appeared as if a mountain moved before him, reared up on his hinder feet: but that prince, who is an excellent horseman, kept his seat, till his attendants ran in, and held the bridle while his Majesty had time to dismount. When he alighted, he surveyed me round with great admiration, but kept without the length of my chain. He ordered his cooks and butlers, who were already prepared, to give me victuals and drinks, which they pushed forward in a sort of vehicles upon wheels, till I could reach them. I took these vehicles, and soon emptied them all; twenty of them were filled with meat, and ten with liquor; each of the former afforded me two or three good mouthfuls, and I emptied the liquor of ten vessels, which was contained in earthen vials, into one vehicle, drinking it off at a draught; and so I did with the rest. The Empress and young Princes of the blood of both sexes, attended by many ladies, sat at some distance in their chairs; but, upon the accident that happened to the emperor's horse, they alighted and came near his person, which I am now going to describe.[1] He is taller, by almost the breadth of my nail, than any of his court; which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders. His features are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip, and arched nose; his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic. He was then past his prime, being twenty-eight years and three quarters old, of which he had reigned about seven, in great felicity and generally victorious. For the better convenience of beholding him, I lay on my side, so that my face was parallel to his, and he stood but three yards off: however, I have had him since many times in my hand, and therefore cannot be deceived in the description. His dress was very plain and simple, and the fashion of it between the Asiatic and the European: but he had on his head a light helmet of gold, adorned with jewels, and a plume on the crest. He held his sword drawn in his hand, to defend himself if I should happen to break loose; it was almost three inches long; the hilt and scabbard were gold enriched with diamonds. His voice was shrill, but very clear and articulate, and I could distinctly hear it when I stood up. The ladies and courtiers were all most magnificently clad, so that the spot they stood upon seemed to resemble a petticoat spread on the ground, embroidered with figures of gold and silver. His Imperial Majesty spoke often to me, and I returned answers, but neither of us could understand a syllable. There were several of his priests and lawyers present (as I conjectured by their habits), who were commanded to address themselves to me; and I spoke to them in as many languages as I had the least smattering of, which were High and Low Dutch, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and Lingua Franca;[2] but all to no purpose. After about two hours the court retired, and I was left with a strong guard, to prevent the impertinence, and probably the malice of the rabble, who were very impatient to crowd about me as near as they durst; and some of them had the impudence to shoot their arrows at me, as I sat on the ground by

[1] The Emperor is George I, but the description is not exact.

[2] A commercial jargon of the eastern Mediterranean.

the door of my house, whereof one very narrowly missed my left eye. But the colonel ordered six of the ringleaders to be seized, and thought no punishment so proper as to deliver them bound into my hands; which some of his soldiers accordingly did, pushing them forwards with the butt-ends of their pikes into my reach; I took them all in my right hand, put five of them into my coat-pocket, and as to the sixth, I made a countenance as if I would eat him alive. The poor man squalled terribly, and the colonel and his officers were in much pain, especially when they saw me take out my penknife: but I soon put them out of fear; for, looking mildly, and immediately cutting the strings he was bound with, I set him gently on the ground and away he ran. I treated the rest in the same manner, taking them one by one out of my pocket and I observed both the soldiers and people were highly obliged at this mark of my clemency, which was represented very much to my advantage at court.[1]

Towards night I got with some difficulty into my house, where I lay on the ground, and continued to do so about a fortnight; during which time the Emperor gave orders to have a bed prepared for me. Six hundred beds of the common measure were brought in carriages, and worked up in my house; an hundred and fifty of their beds, sewn together, made up the breadth and length, and these were four double; which, however, kept me but very indifferently from the hardness of the floor, that was of smooth stone. By the same computation they provided me with sheets, blankets, and coverlets, tolerable enough for one who had been so long inured to hardships as I.

As the news of my arrival spread through the kingdom, it brought prodigious numbers of rich, idle, and curious people to see me; so that the villages were almost emptied, and great neglect of tillage and household affairs must have ensued if his Imperial Majesty had not provided by several proclamations and orders of state against this inconveniency. He directed that those who had already beheld me should return home, and not presume to come within fifty yards of my house, without license from court; whereby the secretaries of state got considerable fees.

In the mean time the Emperor had frequent councils, to debate what course should be taken with me; and I was afterwards assured by a particular friend, a person of great quality, who was looked upon to be as much in the secret as any, that the court was under many difficulties concerning me. They apprehended my breaking loose, that my diet would be very expensive, and might cause a famine. Sometimes they determined to starve me, or at least to shoot me in the face and hands with poisoned arrows, which would soon dispatch me; but again they considered that the stench of so large a carcass might produce a plague in the metropolis, and probably spread through the whole kingdom. In the midst of these consultations, several officers of the army went to the door of the great council-chamber; and two of them, being admitted, gave an account of my behavior to the six criminals above-mentioned; which made so favorable an impression in the breast of his Majesty and the whole board, in my behalf, that an Imperial Commission was issued out, obliging all the villages, nine hundred yards round the city, to deliver in every morning six beeves, forty sheep, and other victuals for my sustenance; together with a proportionable quantity of bread, and wine, and other liquors; for the due payment of which, his Majesty gave assign-

[1] This is meant to suggest the clemency of the Tories (under Oxford and Bolingbroke) at the close of the previous reign in dealing with political offenders.

ments upon his treasury. For this prince lives chiefly upon his own demesnes, seldom, except upon great occasions raising any subsidies upon his subjects, who are bound to attend him in his wars at their own expense. An establishment was also made of six hundred persons to be my domestics, who had board-wages allowed for their maintenance, and tents built for them very conveniently on each side of my door. It was likewise ordered that three hundred tailors should make me a suit of clothes, after the fashion of the country: that six of his majesty's greatest scholars should be employed to instruct me in their language: and lastly, that the Emperor's horses, and those of the nobility and troops of guards, should be frequently exercised in my sight, to accustom themselves to me. All these orders were duly put in execution, and in about three weeks I made a great progress in learning their language; during which time the Emperor frequently honored me with his visits, and was pleased to assist my masters in teaching me. We began already to converse together in some sort; and the first words I learnt were to express my desire that he would please give me my liberty, which I every day repeated on my knees. His answer, as I could comprehend it, was that this must be a work of time, not to be thought on without the advice of his council, and that first I must *Lumos kelmin pesso desmar lon Emposo;* that is, swear a peace with him and his kingdom. However, that I should be used with all kindness; and he advised me to acquire by my patience and discreet behavior the good opinion of himself and his subjects. He desired I would not take it ill, if he gave orders to certain proper officers to search me; for probably I might carry about me several weapons, which must needs be dangerous things, if they answered the bulk of so prodigious a person. I said his Majesty should be satisfied, for I was ready to strip myself, and turn up my pockets before him. This I delivered, part in words, and part in signs. He replied that by the laws of the kingdom I must be searched by two of his officers; that he knew this could not be done without my consent and assistance; that he had so good an opinion of my generosity and justice, as to trust their persons in my hands; that whatever they took from me should be returned when I left the country, or paid for at the rate which I would set upon them. I took up the two officers in my hands, put them first into my coat-pockets, and then into every other pocket about me, except my two fobs and another secret pocket which I had no mind should be searched, wherein I had some little necessaries that were of no consequence to any but myself. In one of my fobs was a silver watch, and in the other a small quantity of gold in a purse. These gentlemen, having pen, ink, and paper about them, made an exact inventory of everything they saw; and, when they had done, desired I would set them down, that they might deliver it to the Emperor. This inventory I afterwards translated into English, and is word for word as follows:

Imprimis, In the right coat-pocket of the Great Man-Mountain (for so I interpret the *Quinbus Flestrin*), after the strictest search, we found only one great piece of coarse cloth, large enough to be a foot-cloth for your Majesty's chief room of state. In the left pocket we saw a huge silver chest, with a cover of the same metal, which we, the searchers, were not able to lift. We desired it should be opened, and one of us, stepping into it, found himself up to the mid-leg in a sort of dust, some part whereof flying up to our faces set us both a-sneezing for several times together. In his right waist-

coat-pocket we found a prodigious bundle of white thin substances, folded one over another, about the bigness of three men, tied with a strong cable, and marked with black figures; which we humbly conceive to be writings, every letter almost half as large as the palm of our hands. In the left there was a sort of engine, from the back of which were extended twenty long poles, resembling the palisadoes before your Majesty's court; wherewith we conjecture the Man-Mountain combs his head, for we did not always trouble him with questions, because we found it a great difficulty to make him understand us. In the large pocket, on the right side of his middle cover (so I translate the word *ranfu-lo,* by which they meant my breeches), we saw a hollow pillar of iron, about the length of a man fastened to a strong piece of timber larger than the pillar; and upon one side of the pillar were huge pieces of iron sticking out, cut into strange figures, which we know not what to make of. In the left pocket, another engine of the same kind. In the smaller pocket on the right side were several round flat pieces of white and red metal, of different bulk; some of the white, which seemed to be silver, were so large and heavy that my comrade and I could hardly lift them. In the left pocket were two black pillars irregularly shaped: we could not, without difficulty, reach the top of them, as we stood at the bottom of his pocket. One of them was covered, and seemed all of a piece: but at the upper end of the other there appeared a white round substance, about twice the bigness of our heads. Within each of these was enclosed a prodigious plate of steel; which, by our orders, we obliged him to show us, because we apprehended they might be dangerous engines. He took them out of their cases, and told us, that in his own country his practice was to shave his beard with one of these, and cut his meat with the other. There were two pockets which we could not enter: these he called his fobs; they were two large slits cut into the top of his middle cover, but squeezed close by the pressure of his belly. Out of the right fob hung a great silver chain, with a wonderful kind of engine at the bottom. We directed him to draw out whatever was fastened to that chain, which appeared to be a globe, half silver, and half of some transparent metal; for, on the transparent side, we saw certain strange figures circularly drawn, and thought we could touch them, till we found our fingers stopped by that lucid substance. He put this engine to our ears, which made an incessant noise, like that of a water-mill. And we conjecture it is either some unknown animal, or the god that he worships; but we are more inclined to the latter opinion, because he assured us (if we understood him right, for he expressed himself very imperfectly) that he seldom did anything without consulting it. He called it his oracle, and said it pointed out the time for every action of his life. From the left fob he took out a net almost large enough for a fisherman, but contrived to open and shut like a purse, and served him for the same use: we found therein several massy pieces of yellow metal, which, if they be real gold, must be of immense value.

Having thus, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, diligently searched all his pockets, we observed a girdle about his waist, made of the hide of some prodigious animal, from which, on the left side, hung a sword of the length of five men; and on the right, a bag, or pouch, divided into two cells, each cell capable of holding three of your Majesty's subjects. In one of these cells were several globes, or balls, of a most ponderous metal, about the bigness of our heads, and requiring a strong hand to lift them:

the other cell contained a heap of certain black grains, but of no great bulk or weight, for we could hold about fifty of them in the palms of our hands.

This is an exact inventory of what we found about the body of the Man-Mountain, who used us with great civility, and due respect to your Majesty's Commission. Signed and sealed on the fourth day of the eighty-ninth moon of your Majesty's auspicious reign:

CLEFRIN FRELOCK,
MARSI FRELOCK.

When this inventory was read over to the Emperor, he directed me, although in very gentle terms, to deliver up the several particulars. He first called for my scimitar, which I took out, scabbard and all. In the meantime he ordered three thousand of his choicest troops (who then attended him) to surround me at a distance, with their bows and arrows just ready to discharge: but I did not observe it, for my eyes were wholly fixed upon his Majesty. He then desired me to draw my scimitar, which, although it had got some rust by the sea-water, was in most parts exceeding bright. I did so, and immediately all the troops gave a shout between terror and surprise; for the sun shone clear, and the reflection dazzled their eyes, as I waved the scimitar to and fro in my hand. His Majesty, who is a most magnanimous prince, was less daunted than I could expect; he ordered me to return it into the scabbard, and cast it on the ground as gently as I could, about six feet from the end of my chain. The next thing he demanded was one of the hollow iron pillars; by which he meant my pocket-pistols. I drew it out, and at his desire, as well as I could, expressed to him the use of it; and charging it only with powder, which, by the closeness of my pouch, happened to escape wetting in the sea (an inconvenience against which all prudent mariners take special care to provide), I first cautioned the Emperor not to be afraid, and then I let it off in the air. The astonishment here was much greater than at the sight of my scimitar. Hundreds fell down as if they had been struck dead; and even the Emperor, although he stood his ground, could not recover himself in some time. I delivered up both my pistols in the same manner as I had done my scimitar, and then my pouch of powder and bullets; begging him that the former might be kept from fire, for it would kindle with the smallest spark, and blow up his imperial palace into the air. I likewise delivered up my watch, which the Emperor was very curious to see, and commanded two of his tallest yeomen of the guards to bear it on a pole upon their shoulders, as draymen in England do a barrel of ale. He was amazed at the continual noise it made, and the motion of the minute-hand, which he could easily discern; for their sight is much more acute than ours: and asked the opinions of his learned men about him, which were various and remote, as the reader may well imagine without my repeating; although, indeed, I could not very perfectly understand them. I then gave up my silver and copper money, my purse with nine large pieces of gold, and some smaller ones; my knife and razor, my comb and silver snuff-box, my handkerchief and journal-book. My scimitar, pistols, and pouch were conveyed in carriages to his Majesty's stores; but the rest of my goods were returned to me.[1]

I had, as I before observed, one private pocket which escaped their search, wherein there was a pair of spectacles (which I

[1] For a time after the accession of George I the Whigs instituted strict and often unjustified searches in the houses of their political opponents who were suspected of favoring the house of Stuart. Swift is not only satirizing these inquisitions, but showing by Gulliver's manner how unnecessary they were.

sometimes use for the weakness of my eyes), a pocket perspective,[1] and some other little conveniences; which, being of no consequence to the Emperor, I did not think myself bound in honor to discover,[2] and I apprehended they might be lost or spoiled, if I ventured them out of my possession.

CHAPTER III

The Author diverts the Emperor, and his nobility of both sexes, in a very uncommon manner. The diversions of the court of Lilliput described. The Author has his liberty granted him upon certain conditions.

My gentleness and good behavior had gained so far on the Emperor and his court, and indeed upon the army and people in general, that I began to conceive hopes of getting my liberty in a short time. I took all possible methods to cultivate this favorable disposition. The natives came by degrees to be less apprehensive of any danger from me. I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my hand; and at last the boys and girls would venture to come and play at hide-and-seek in my hair. I had now made a good progress in understanding and speaking their language. The Emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shows, wherein they exceed all nations I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two foot, and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments and high favor at court. They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth, or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace (which often happens), five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope; and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap,[3] the Treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire. I have seen him do the summerset [4] several times together upon a trencher fixed on a rope which is no thicker than a common packthread in England. My friend Reldresal,[5] principal Secretary for private Affairs, is in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the Treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival Flimnap would have infallibly broke his neck, if one of the King's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.[6]

There is likewise another diversion,

[1] telescope [2] reveal

[3] See note at beginning of the *Travels*.
[4] somersault
[5] Probably James Stanhope.
[6] Walpole was displaced in office for a time by Stanhope.

which is only shown before the Emperor and Empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads of six inches long. One is blue, the other red, and the third green.[1] These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favor. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty's great chamber of state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity, very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or new world. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates advancing, one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the Emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the blue colored silk; the red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle; and you see few great persons about this court who are not adorned with one of these girdles.

The horses of the army, and those of the royal stables, having been daily led before me, were no longer shy, but would come up to my very feet without starting. The riders would leap them over my hand, as I held it on the ground; and one of the Emperor's huntsmen, upon a large courser, took my foot, shoe and all; which was indeed a prodigious leap. I had the good fortune to divert the Emperor one day after a very extraordinary manner. I desired he would order several sticks of two foot high, and the thickness of an ordinary cane, to be brought me; whereupon his Majesty commanded the master of his woods to give directions accordingly; and the next morning six woodmen arrived, with as many carriages, drawn by eight horses to each. I took nine of these sticks, fixing them firmly in the ground in a quadrangular figure, two foot and a half square. I took four other sticks and tied them parallel at each corner, about two foot from the ground; then I fastened my handkerchief to the nine sticks that stood erect; and extended it on all sides, till it was tight as the top of a drum; and the four parallel sticks, rising about five inches higher than the handkerchief, served as ledges on each side. When I had finished my work, I desired the Emperor to let a troop of his best horse, twenty-four in number, come and exercise upon this plain. His majesty approved of the proposal, and I took them up, one by one, in my hands, ready mounted and armed, with the proper officers to exercise them. As soon as they got in order, they divided into two parties, performed mock skirmishes, discharged blunt arrows, drew their swords, fled and pursued, attacked and retired, and, in short, discovered the best military discipline I ever beheld. The parallel sticks secured them and their horses from falling over the stage; and the Emperor was so much delighted that he ordered this entertainment to be repeated several days, and once was pleased to be lifted up, and give the word of command; and with great difficulty persuaded even the Empress herself to let me hold her in her close chair within two yards of the stage, from whence she was able to take a full view of the whole performance. It was my good fortune that no ill accident happened in these entertainments; only once a fiery horse, that belonged to one of the

[1] The Order of the Garter, Bath, and Thistle, respectively.

captains, pawing with his hoof, struck a hole in my handkerchief, and his foot slipping, he overthrew his rider and himself; but I immediately relieved them both, and covering the hole with one hand, I set down the troop with the other, in the same manner as I took them up. The horse that fell was strained in the left shoulder, but the rider got no hurt; and I repaired my handkerchief as well as I could: however, I would not trust to the strength of it any more, in such dangerous enterprises.

About two or three days before I was set at liberty, as I was entertaining the court with these kind of feats, there arrived an express to inform his Majesty that some of his subjects, riding near the place where I was first taken up, had seen a great black substance lying on the ground, very oddly shaped, extending its edges round as wide as his Majesty's bedchamber, and rising up in the middle as high as a man; that it was no living creature, as they at first apprehended, for it lay on the grass without motion, and some of them had walked round it several times: that by mounting upon each other's shoulders, they had got to the top, which was flat and even, and stamping upon it, they found it was hollow within; that they humbly conceived it might be something belonging to the Man-Mountain; and if his Majesty pleased, they would undertake to bring it with only five horses. I presently knew what they meant, and was glad at heart to receive this intelligence. It seems upon my first reaching the shore after our shipwreck, I was in such confusion that before I came to the place where I went to sleep, my hat, which I had fastened with a string to my head while I was rowing, and had stuck on all the time I was swimming, fell off after I came to land; the string, as I conjecture, breaking by some accident, which I never observed, but thought my hat had been lost at sea. I entreated his Imperial Majesty to give orders it might be brought to me as soon as possible, describing to him the use and the nature of it: and the next day the wagoners arrived with it, but not in a very good condition; they had bored two holes in the brim, within an inch and half of the edge, and fastened two hooks in the holes; these hooks were tied by a long cord to the harness, and thus my hat was dragged along for above half an English mile; but the ground in that country being extremely smooth and level, it received less damage than I expected.

Two days after this adventure, the Emperor, having ordered that part of his army which quarters in and about his metropolis to be in readiness, took a fancy of diverting himself in a very singular manner. He desired I would stand like a Colossus, with my legs as far asunder as I conveniently could. He then commanded his General (who was an old experienced leader, and a great patron of mine) to draw up the troops in close order, and march them under me;[1] the foot by twenty-four in a breast, and the horse by sixteen, with drums beating, colors flying, and pikes advanced. This body consisted of three thousand foot and a thousand horse. His Majesty gave orders, upon pain of death, that every soldier in his march should observe the strictest decency with regard to my person; which, however, could not prevent some of the younger officers from turning up their eyes as they passed under me. And, to confess the truth, my breeches were at that time in so ill a condition, that they afforded some opportunities for laughter.

I had sent so many memorials and petitions for my liberty that his Majesty at length mentioned the matter, first in the cabinet, and then in a full council;

[1] George I had a passion for military reviews.

where it was opposed by none, except Skyresh Bolgolam,[1] who was pleased, without any provocation, to be my mortal enemy. But it was carried against him by the whole board, and confirmed by the Emperor. That minister was *Galbet,* or Admiral of the realm, very much in his master's confidence, and a person well versed in affairs, but of a morose and sour complexion. However, he was at length persuaded to comply; but prevailed that the articles and conditions upon which I should be set free, and to which I must swear, should be drawn up by himself. These articles were brought to me by Skyresh Bolgolam in person, attended by two under-secretaries and several persons of distinction. After they were read, I was demanded to swear to the performance of them; first, in the manner of my own country, and afterwards in the method prescribed by their laws; which was, to hold my right foot in my left hand, and to place the middle finger of my right hand on the crown of my head, and my thumb on the tip of my right ear. But, because the reader may be curious to have some idea of the style and manner of expression peculiar to that people, as well as to know the articles upon which I recovered my liberty, I have made a translation of the whole instrument, word for word, as near as I was able, which I here offer to the public.

Golbasto Momaren Evlame Gurdilo Shefin Mully Ully Gue, most mighty Emperor of Lilliput, delight and terror of the universe, whose dominions extend five thousand *blustrugs* (about twelve miles in circumference) to the extremities of the globe; monarch of all monarchs, taller than the sons of men; whose feet press down to the center, and whose head strikes against the sun; at whose nod the princes of the earth shake their knees; pleasant as the spring, comfortable as the summer, fruitful as autumn, dreadful as winter. His most sublime Majesty proposes to the Man-Mountain, lately arrived to our celestial dominions the following articles, which, by a solemn oath, he shall be obliged to perform:

First, the Man-Mountain shall not depart from our dominions, without our license under our great seal.

2d. He shall not presume to come into our metropolis without our express order; at which time, the inhabitants shall have two hours' warning to keep within their doors.

3d. The said Man-Mountain shall confine his walks to our principal high roads, and not offer to walk or lie down in a meadow or field of corn.

4th. As he walks the said roads, he shall take the utmost care not to trample upon the bodies of any of our loving subjects, their horses or carriages, nor take any of our subjects into his hands without their own consent.

5th. If an express requires extraordinary dispatch, the Man-Mountain shall be obliged to carry, in his pocket, the messenger and horse a six days' journey once in every moon, and return the said messenger back (if so required) safe to our Imperial Presence.

6th. He shall be our ally against our enemies in the Island of Blefuscu,[2] and do his utmost to destroy their fleet, which is now preparing to invade us.

7th. That the said Man-Mountain shall, at his times of leisure, be aiding and assisting to our workmen, in helping to raise certain great stones, towards covering the wall of the principal park, and other our royal buildings.

8th. That the said Man-Mountain shall, in two moons' time, deliver in an exact survey of the circumference of our

[1] Probably the Duke of Argyll.

[2] Swift reverses nature, making France an island and England the continent.

dominions, by a computation of his own paces round the coast.

Lastly, That, upon his solemn oath to observe all the above articles, the said Man-Mountain shall have a daily allowance of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 of our subjects, with free access to our Royal Person, and other marks of our favor. Given at our Palace at Belfaborac, the twelfth day of the ninety-first moon of our reign.

I swore and subscribed to these articles with great cheerfulness and content, although some of them were not so honorable as I could have wished; which proceeded wholly from the malice of Skyresh Bolgolam, the High-Admiral; whereupon my chains were immediately unlocked, and I was at full liberty. The Emperor himself, in person, did me the honor to be by at the whole ceremony. I made my acknowledgments by prostrating myself at his Majesty's feet: but he commanded me to rise; and after many gracious expressions, which to avoid the censure of vanity I shall not repeat, he added that he hoped I should prove a useful servant, and well deserve all the favors he had already conferred upon me, or might do for the future.

The reader may please to observe that in the last article for the recovery of my liberty, the Emperor stipulates to allow me a quantity of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 Lilliputians. Some time after, asking a friend at court how they came to fix on that determinate number, he told me that his Majesty's mathematicians, having taken the height of my body by the help of a quadrant, and finding it to exceed theirs in the proportion of twelve to one, they concluded from the similarity of their bodies that mine must contain at least 1728 of theirs, and consequently would require as much food as was necessary to support that number of Lilliputians. By which the reader may conceive an idea of the ingenuity of that people, as well as the prudent and exact economy of so great a prince.

CHAPTER IV

Mildendo, the metropolis of Lilliput, described, together with the Emperor's palace. A conversation between the Author and a principal Secretary, concerning the affairs of that empire. The Author's offers to serve the Emperor in his wars.

The first request I made after I had obtained my liberty was that I might have license to see Mildendo, the metropolis; which the Emperor easily granted me, but with a special charge to do no hurt either to the inhabitants or their houses. The people had notice, by proclamation, of my design to visit the town. The wall which encompassed it is two foot and a half high, and at least eleven inches broad, so that a coach and horses may be driven very safely round it; and it is flanked with strong towers at ten foot distance. I stepped over the great Western Gate, and passed very gently and sideling through the two principal streets, only in my short waistcoat, for fear of damaging the roofs and eaves of the houses with the skirts of my coat. I walked with the utmost circumspection, to avoid treading on any stragglers that might remain in the streets, although the orders were strict, that all people should keep in their houses at their own peril. The garret windows and tops of houses were so crowded with spectators, that I thought in all my travels I had not seen a more populous place. The city is an exact square, each side of the wall being five hundred foot long. The two great streets, which run cross and divide it into

four quarters, are five foot wide. The lanes and alleys, which I could not enter, but only viewed them as I passed, are from twelve to eighteen inches. The town is capable of holding five hundred thousand souls. The houses are from three to five stories, the shops and markets well provided.

The Emperor's palace is in the center of the city, where the two great streets meet. It is enclosed by a wall of two foot high, and twenty foot distance from the buildings. I had his Majesty's permission to step over this wall; and the space being so wide between that and the palace, I could easily view it on every side. The outward court is a square of forty foot, and includes two other courts: in the inmost are the royal apartments, which I was very desirous to see, but found it extremely difficult; for the great gates, from one square into another, were but eighteen inches high, and seven inches wide. Now the buildings of the outer court were at least five foot high, and it was impossible for me to stride over them without infinite damage to the pile, though the walls were strongly built of hewn stone, and four inches thick. At the same time the Emperor had a great desire that I should see the magnificence of his palace; but this I was not able to do till three days after, which I spent in cutting down with my knife some of the largest trees in the royal park, about an hundred yards distant from the city. Of these trees I made two stools, each about three foot high, and strong enough to bear my weight. The people having received notice a second time, I went again through the city to the palace with my two stools in my hands. When I came to the side of the outer court, I stood upon one stool, and took the other in my hand: this I lifted over the roof, and gently set it down on the space between the first and second court, which was eight foot wide. I then stept over the building very conveniently from one stool to the other, and drew up the first after me with a hooked stick. By this contrivance I got into the inmost court; and, lying down upon my side, I applied my face to the windows of the middle stories, which were left open on purpose, and discovered the most splendid apartments that can be imagined. There I saw the Empress and the young Princes, in their several lodgings, with their chief attendants about them. Her Imperial Majesty was pleased to smile very graciously upon me, and gave me out of the window her hand to kiss.[1]

But I shall not anticipate the reader with farther descriptions of this kind, because I reserve them for a greater work, which is now almost ready for the press, containing a general description of this empire, from its first erection, through a long series of princes, with a particular account of their wars and politics, laws, learning, and religion: their plants and animals, their peculiar manners and customs, with other matters very curious and useful; my chief design at present being only to relate such events and transactions as happened to the public or to myself during a residence of about nine months in that empire.

One morning, about a fortnight after I had obtained my liberty, Reldresal, principal Secretary (as they style him) of private Affairs, came to my house attended only by one servant. He ordered his coach to wait at a distance, and desired I would give him an hour's audience; which I readily consented to, on account of his quality and personal merits, as well as the many good offices he had done me during my solicitations at court. I offered to lie down that he might the more conveniently reach my ear; but he chose rather to let me hold

[1] Queen Anne, somewhat illogically.

him in my hand during our conversation. He began with compliments on my liberty; said he might pretend to some merit in it; but however added, that if it had not been for the present situation of things at court, perhaps I might not have obtained it so soon. For, said he, as flourishing a condition as we may appear to be in to foreigners, we labor under two mighty evils; a violent faction at home, and the danger of an invasion, by a most potent enemy, from abroad. As to the first, you are to understand that for above seventy moons past there have been two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of *Tramecksan* and *Slamecksan*, from the high and low heels of their shoes, by which they distinguish themselves.[1] It is alleged, indeed, that the High-Heels are most agreeable to our ancient constitution; but, however this be, his Majesty hath determined to make use of only Low-Heels in the administration of the government, and all offices in the gift of the Crown, as you cannot but observe: and particularly that his Majesty's imperial heels are lower at least by a *drurr* than any of his court; (*drurr* is a measure about the fourteenth part of an inch). The animosities between these two parties run so high, that they will neither eat nor drink nor talk with each other. We compute the *Tramecksan*, or High-Heels, to exceed us in number; but the power is wholly on our side. We apprehend his Imperial Highness, the Heir to the Crown, to have some tendency towards the High-Heels; at least, we can plainly discover that one of his heels is higher than the other, which gives him a hobble in his gait.[2] Now, in the midst of these intestine disquiets, we are threatened with an invasion from the Island of Blefuscu, which is the other great empire of the universe, almost as large and powerful as this of his Majesty. For as to what we heard you affirm, that there are other kingdoms and states in the world inhabited by human creatures as large as yourself, our philosophers are in much doubt, and would rather conjecture that you dropped from the moon, or one of the stars; because it is certain that an hundred mortals of your bulk would in a short time destroy all the fruits and cattle of his Majesty's dominions; besides, our histories of six thousand moons make no mention of any other regions than the two great empires of Lilliput and Blefuscu. Which two mighty powers have, as I was going to tell you, been engaged in a most obstinate war for six-and-thirty moons past. It began upon the following occasion. It is allowed on all hands, that the primitive way of breaking eggs, before we eat them, was upon the larger end; but his present Majesty's grandfather, while he was a boy, going to eat an egg, and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his fingers; [3] whereupon the Emperor, his father, published an edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great penalties, to break the smaller end of their eggs. The people so highly resented this law, that our histories tell us there have been six rebellions raised on that account; wherein one Emperor lost his life,[4] and another his crown.[5] These civil commotions were constantly fomented by the monarchs of Blefuscu; and when they were quelled, the exiles always fled for refuge to that empire. It is computed that eleven thousand persons have at several times suffered death, rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end.[6] Many hundred large volumes have been published upon this controversy: but the books of the Big-Endians have been

[1] See note at beginning of the *Travels*.
[2] The Prince of Wales, afterwards George II, was strongly opposed to the king's ministers.
[3] Henry VIII.
[4] Charles I.
[5] James II.
[6] In the religious persecutions under Elizabeth and Mary.

long forbidden, and the whole party rendered incapable by law of holding employments.[1] During the course of these troubles, the Emperors of Blefuscu did frequently expostulate by their ambassadors, accusing us of making a schism in religion by offending against a fundamental doctrine of our great prophet Lustrog, in the fifty-fourth chapter of the Blundecral, which is their Alcoran. This, however, is thought to be a mere strain upon the text; for the words are these: *That all true believers break their eggs at the convenient end;* and which is the convenient end seems, in my humble opinion, to be left to every man's conscience, or at least in the power of the chief magistrate to determine. Now, the Big-Endian exiles have found so much credit in the Emperor of Blefuscu's court, and so much private assistance and encouragement from their party here at home, that a bloody war hath been carried on between the two empires for six and thirty moons, with various success; during which time we have lost forty capital ships, and a much greater number of smaller vessels, together with thirty thousand of our best seamen and soldiers; and the damage received by the enemy is reckoned to be somewhat greater than ours. However, they have now equipped a numerous fleet, and are just preparing to make a descent upon us; and his Imperial Majesty, placing great confidence in your valor and strength, hath commanded me to lay this account of his affairs before you.

I desired the Secretary to present my humble duty to the Emperor, and to let him know that I thought it would not become me, who was a foreigner, to interfere with parties; but I was ready, with the hazard of my life, to defend his person and state against all invaders.

[1] Refers to the political disabilities of the Catholics.

CHAPTER V

The Author, by an extraordinary stratagem, prevents an invasion. A high title of honor is conferred upon him. Ambassadors arrive from the Emperor of Blefuscu, and sue for peace.

The empire of Blefuscu is an island situated to the northeast side of Lilliput, from whence it is parted only by a channel of eight hundred yards wide. I had not yet seen it, and upon this notice of an intended invasion I avoided appearing on that side of the coast, for fear of being discovered by some of the enemy's ships, who had received no intelligence of me, all intercourse between the two empires having been strictly forbidden during the war, upon pain of death, and an embargo laid by our Emperor upon all vessels whatsoever. I communicated to his Majesty a project I had formed of seizing the enemy's whole fleet: which, as our scouts assured us, lay at anchor in the harbor, ready to sail with the first fair wind. I consulted the most experienced seamen upon the depth of the channel, which they had often plumbed; who told me that in the middle, at high water, it was seventy *glumgluffs* deep, which is about six foot of European measure; and the rest of it fifty *glumgluffs* at most. I walked towards the northeast coast, over against Blefuscu; and lying down behind a hillock, I took out my small perspective-glass, and viewed the enemy's fleet at anchor, consisting of about fifty men-of-war, and a great number of transports: I then came back to my house, and gave order (for which I had a warrant) for a great quantity of the strongest cable and bars of iron. The cable was about as thick as packthread, and the bars of the length and size of a knitting-needle. I trebled the cable to make it stronger, and for the

same reason I twisted three of the iron bars together, binding the extremities into a hook. Having thus fixed fifty hooks to as many cables, I went back to the northeast coast, and, putting off my coat, shoes, and stockings, walked into the sea in my leathern jerkin, about half an hour before high water. I waded with what haste I could, and swam in the middle about thirty yards, till I felt ground; I arrived at the fleet in less than half an hour. The enemy was so frightened when they saw me, that they leaped out of their ships and swam to shore, where they could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls. I then took my tackling, and fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed, the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face; and, besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work. My greatest apprehension was for my eyes, which I should have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I kept, among other little necessaries, a pair of spectacles in a private pocket, which, as I observed before, had scaped the Emperor's searchers. These I took out and fastened as strongly as I could upon my nose, and thus armed, went on boldly with my work, in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles, but without any other effect, further than a little to discompose them. I had now fastened all the hooks, and taking the knot in my hand, began to pull; but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors, so that the boldest part of my enterprise remained. I therefore let go the cord, and leaving the hooks fixed to the ships, I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving about two hundred shots in my face and hands; then I took up the knotted end of the cables, to which my hooks were tied, and with great ease drew fifty of the enemy's largest men-of-war after me.

The Blefuscudians, who had not the least imagination of what I intended, were at first confounded with astonishment. They had seen me cut the cables, and thought my design was only to let the ships run adrift, or fall foul on each other: but when they perceived the whole fleet moving in order, and saw me pulling at the end, they set up such a scream of grief and despair that it is almost impossible to describe or conceive. When I had got out of danger, I stopped awhile to pick out the arrows that stuck in my hands and face; and rubbed on some of the same ointment that was given me at my first arrival, as I have formerly mentioned. I then took off my spectacles, and waiting about an hour till the tide was a little fallen, I waded through the middle with my cargo, and arrived safe at the royal port of Lilliput.[1]

The Emperor and his whole court stood on the shore, expecting the issue of this great adventure. They saw the ships move forward in a large half-moon, but could not discern me, who was up to my breast in water. When I advanced to the middle of the channel, they were yet in more pain, because I was under water to my neck. The Emperor concluded me to be drowned, and that the enemy's fleet was approaching in a hostile manner: but he was soon eased of his fears, for the channel growing shallower every step I made, I came in a short time within hearing, and holding up the end of the cable, by which the fleet was fastened, I cried in a loud voice, *Long live the most puissant Emperor of Lilliput!* This great prince received me at my landing with all possible encomiums, and cre-

[1] The Treaty of Utrecht left the British navy in a greatly improved position.

ated me a *Nardac* upon the spot, which is the highest title of honor among them.

His Majesty desired I would take some other opportunity of bringing all the rest of his enemy's ships into his ports. And so unmeasurable is the ambition of princes, that he seemed to think of nothing less than reducing the whole empire of Blefuscu into a province, and governing it by a viceroy; of destroying the Big-Endian exiles, and compelling that people to break the smaller end of their eggs, by which he would remain the sole monarch of the whole world.[1] But I endeavored to divert him from this design, by many arguments drawn from the topics of policy as well as justice; and I plainly protested that I would never be an instrument of bringing a free and brave people into slavery. And when the matter was debated in council, the wisest part of the ministry were of my opinion.

This open, bold declaration of mine was so opposite to the schemes and politics of his Imperial Majesty that he could never forgive me; he mentioned it in a very artful manner at council, where I was told that some of the wisest appeared at least, by their silence, to be of my opinion; but others, who were my secret enemies, could not forbear some expressions which by a side-wind reflected on me. And from this time began an intrigue between his Majesty and a junto of ministers, maliciously bent against me, which broke out in less than two months, and had like to have ended in my utter destruction. Of so little weight are the greatest services to princes, when put into the balance with a refusal to gratify their passions.

About three weeks after this exploit, there arrived a solemn embassy from Blefuscu, with humble offers of a peace; which was soon concluded upon conditions very advantageous to our Emperor, wherewith I shall not trouble the reader. There were six ambassadors with a train of about five hundred persons, and their entry was very magnificent, suitable to the grandeur of their master and the importance of their business. When their treaty was finished, wherein I did them several good offices by the credit I now had, or at least appeared to have, at court, their Excellencies, who were privately told how much I had been their friend, made me a visit in form. They began with many compliments upon my valor and generosity, invited me to that kingdom in the Emperor their master's name, and desired me to show them some proofs of my prodigious strength, of which they had heard so many wonders; wherein I readily obliged them, but shall not trouble the reader with the particulars.

When I had for some time entertained their Excellencies, to their infinite satisfaction and surprise, I desired they would do me the honor to present my most humble respects to the Emperor their master, the renown of whose virtues had so justly filled the whole world with admiration, and whose royal person I resolved to attend before I returned to my own country: accordingly, the next time I had the honor to see our Emperor, I desired his general license to wait on the Blefuscudian monarch, which he was pleased to grant me, as I could plainly perceive, in a very cold manner; but could not guess the reason, till I had a whisper from a certain person, that Flimnap and Bolgolam had represented my intercourse with those ambassadors as a mark of disaffection,[2] from which I am

[1] Many people in England believed that if the war were vigorously prosecuted, England might subjugate France.

[2] A clear allusion to the impeachment of Bolingbroke, who was accused of disclosing to the French minister in London matters pertaining to the Treaty of Utrecht.

sure my heart was wholly free. And this was the first time I began to conceive some imperfect idea of courts and ministers.

It is to be observed that these ambassadors spoke to me by an interpreter, the languages of both empires differing as much from each other as any two in Europe, and each nation priding itself upon the antiquity, beauty, and energy of their own tongues, with an avowed contempt for that of their neighbor; yet our Emperor, standing upon the advantage he had got by the seizure of their fleet, obliged them to deliver their credentials and make their speech in the Lilliputian tongue. And it must be confessed that from the great intercourse of trade and commerce between both realms, from the continual reception of exiles which is mutual among them, and from the custom, in each empire, to send their young nobility and richer gentry to the other, in order to polish themselves by seeing the world and understanding men and manners; there are few persons of distinction, or merchants, or seamen, who dwell in the maritime parts, but what can hold conversation in both tongues; as I found some weeks after, when I went to pay my respects to the Emperor of Blefuscu, which, in the midst of great misfortunes, through the malice of my enemies, proved a very happy adventure to me, as I shall relate in its proper place.

The reader may remember that when I signed those articles upon which I recovered my liberty, there were some which I disliked, upon account of their being too servile; neither could anything but an extreme necessity have forced me to submit. But being now a *Nardac* of the highest rank in that empire, such offices were looked upon as below my dignity, and the Emperor (to do him justice) never once mentioned them to me. . . .

CHAPTER VI

Of the inhabitants of Lilliput; their learning, laws, and customs, the manner of educating their children. The Author's way of living in that country. His vindication of a great lady.

ALTHOUGH I intend to leave the description of this empire to a particular treatise, yet in the mean time I am content to gratify the curious reader with some general ideas. As the common size of the natives is somewhat under six inches high, so there is an exact proportion in all other animals, as well as plants and trees: for instance, the tallest horses and oxen are between four and five inches in height, the sheep an inch and a half, more or less: their geese about the bigness of a sparrow, and so the several gradations downwards, till you come to the smallest, which to my sight were almost invisible; but nature hath adapted the eyes of the Lilliputians to all objects proper for their view: they see with great exactness, but at no great distance. And to show the sharpness of their sight towards objects that are near, I have been much pleased with observing a cook pulling a lark which was not so large as a common fly; and a young girl threading an invisible needle with invisible silk. Their tallest trees are about seven foot high: I mean some of those in the great royal park, the tops whereof I could but just reach with my fist clinched. The other vegetables are in the same proportion; but this I leave to the reader's imagination.

I shall say but little at present of their learning, which for many ages hath flourished in all its branches among them: but their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right, like the Europeans; nor from the right to the left, like the Arabians; nor from

up to down, like the Chinese; nor from down to up, like the Cascagians; but aslant from one corner of the paper to the other, like ladies in England.[1]

They bury their dead with their heads directly downwards, because they hold an opinion that in eleven thousand moons they are all to rise again; in which period the earth (which they conceive to be flat) will turn upside down, and by this means they shall, at their resurrection, be found ready standing on their feet. The learned among them confess the absurdity of this doctrine, but the practice still continues, in compliance to the vulgar.

There are some laws and customs in this empire very peculiar; and if they were not so directly contrary to those of my own dear country, I should be tempted to say a little in their justification. It is only to be wished they were as well executed. The first I shall mention relates to informers. All crimes against the state are punished here with the utmost severity; but if the person accused maketh his innocence plainly to appear upon his trial, the accuser is immediately put to an ignominious death; and out of his goods or lands the innocent person is quadruply recompensed for the loss of his time, for the danger he underwent, for the hardship of his imprisonment, and for all the charges he hath been at in making his defence. Or, if that fund be deficient, it is largely supplied by the Crown. The Emperor does also confer on him some public mark of his favor, and proclamation is made of his innocence through the whole city.

They look upon fraud as a greater crime than theft, and therefore seldom fail to punish it with death; for they allege that care and vigilance, with a very common understanding, may preserve a man's goods from thieves, but honesty has no fence against superior cunning; and since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, where fraud is permitted and connived at, or hath no law to punish it, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage. I remember, when I was once interceding with the Emperor for a criminal who had wronged his master of a great sum of money, which he had received by order, and ran away with; and happening to tell his Majesty by way of extenuation, that it was only a breach of trust, the Emperor thought it monstrous in me to offer as a defence the greatest aggravation of the crime: and truly I had little to say in return, farther than the common answer, that different nations had different customs; for I confess I was heartily ashamed.

Although we usually call reward and punishment the two hinges upon which all government turns, yet I could never observe this maxim to be put in practice by any nation except that of Lilliput. Whoever can there bring sufficient proof that he hath strictly observed the laws of his country for seventy-three moons, hath a claim to certain privileges, according to his quality and condition of life, with a proportionable sum of money out of a fund appropriated for that use: he likewise acquires the title of *Snilpall,* or Legal, which is added to his name, but does not descend to posterity. And these people thought it a prodigious defect of policy among us, when I told them that our laws were enforced only by penalties, without any mention of reward. It is upon this account that the image of Justice, in their courts of judicature, is formed with six eyes, two before, as many behind, and on each side one, to signify circumspection; with a bag of gold open in her right hand, and a sword sheathed in her left, to show she is more disposed to reward than to punish.

[1] An actual fad at the time.

In choosing persons for all employments, they have more regard to good morals than to great abilities; for, since government is necessary to mankind, they believe that the common size of human understandings is fitted to some station or other; and that Providence never intended to make the management of public affairs a mystery to be comprehended only by a few persons of sublime genius, of which there seldom are three born in an age: but they suppose truth, justice, temperance, and the like, to be in every man's power; the practice of which virtues, assisted by experience and a good intention, would qualify any man for the service of his country, except where a course of study is required. But they thought the want of moral virtues was so far from being supplied by superior endowments of the mind, that employments could never be put into such dangerous hands as those of persons so qualified; and at least, that the mistakes committed by ignorance, in a virtuous disposition, would never be of such fatal consequence to the public weal, as the practices of a man whose inclinations led him to be corrupt, and had great abilities to manage, to multiply, and defend his corruptions.

In like manner, the disbelief of a Divine Providence renders a man uncapable of holding any public station; for since kings avow themselves to be the deputies of Providence, the Lilliputians think nothing can be more absurd than for a prince to employ such men as disown the authority under which he acts.

In relating these and the following laws, I would only be understood to mean the original institutions, and not the most scandalous corruptions, into which these people are fallen by the degenerate nature of man. For, as to that infamous practice of acquiring great employments by dancing on the ropes, or badges of favor and distinction by leaping over sticks and creeping under them, the reader is to observe that they were first introduced by the grandfather [1] of the Emperor now reigning, and grew to the present height by the gradual increase of party and faction.

Ingratitude is among them, a capital crime, as we read it to have been in some other countries: for they reason thus, that whoever makes ill returns to his benefactor must needs be a common enemy to the rest of mankind, from whom he hath received no obligation, and therefore such a man is not fit to live.

Their notions relating to the duties of parents and children differ extremely from ours. For, since the conjunction of male and female is founded upon the great law of nature, in order to propagate and continue the species, the Lilliputians will needs have it, that men and women are joined together like other animals, by the motives of concupiscence; and that their tenderness towards their young proceeds from the like natural principle: for which reason they will never allow that a child is under any obligation to his father for begetting him, or to his mother for bringing him into the world, which, considering the miseries of human life, was neither a benefit in itself, nor intended so by his parents, whose thoughts in their love-encounters were otherwise employed. Upon these, and other like reasonings, their opinion is, that parents are the last of all others to be trusted with the education of their own children; [2] and therefore they have in every town public nurseries, where all parents, except cottagers and laborers, are obliged to send their infants of both sexes to be reared and educated, when they come to the age of twenty moons, at which time they are

[1] James I, the *great*-grandfather of George I.

[2] There was much dissatisfaction with the state of education in England. The subject was frequently discussed.

supposed to have some rudiments of docility. These schools are of several kinds, suited to different qualities, and to both sexes. They have certain professors well skilled in preparing children for such a condition of life as befits the rank of their parents, and their own capacities, as well as inclinations. I shall first say something of the male nurseries, and then of the female.

The nurseries for males of noble or eminent birth are provided with grave and learned professors, and their several deputies. The clothes and food of the children are plain and simple. They are bred up in the principles of honor, justice, courage, modesty, clemency, religion, and love of their country; they are always employed in some business, except in the times of eating and sleeping, which are very short, and two hours for diversions, consisting of bodily exercises. They are dressed by men till four years of age, and then are obliged to dress themselves, although their quality be ever so great; and the women attendants, who are aged proportionably to ours at fifty, perform only the most menial offices. They are never suffered to converse with servants, but go together, in smaller and greater numbers, to take their diversions, and always in the presence of a professor, or one of his deputies; whereby they avoid those early bad impressions of folly and vice to which our children are subject. Their parents are suffered to see them only twice a year; the visit is to last but an hour. They are allowed to kiss the child at meeting and parting; but a professor, who always stands by on those occasions, will not suffer them to whisper, or use any fondling expressions, or bring any presents of toys, sweetmeats, and the like.

The pension from each family for the education and entertainment of a child, upon failure of due payment, is levied by the Emperor's officers.

The nurseries for children of ordinary gentlemen, merchants, traders, and handicrafts, are managed proportionably after the same manner; only those designed for trades are put out apprentices at eleven years old, whereas those of persons of quality continue in their exercises till fifteen, which answers to one and twenty with us: but the confinement is gradually lessened for the last three years.

In the female nurseries, the young girls of quality are educated much like the males, only they are dressed by orderly servants of their own sex; but always in the presence of a professor or deputy, till they come to dress themselves, which is at five years old. And if it be found that these nurses ever presume to entertain the girls with frightful or foolish stories, or the common follies practised by chambermaids among us, they are publicly whipped thrice about the city, imprisoned for a year, and banished for life to the most desolate part of the country. Thus the young ladies there are as much ashamed of being cowards and fools as the men, and despise all personal ornaments, beyond decency and cleanliness: neither did I perceive any difference in their education made by their difference of sex, only that the exercises of the females were not altogether so robust; and that some rules were given them relating to domestic life, and a smaller compass of learning was enjoined them: for their maxim is that among people of quality a wife should be always a reasonable and agreeable companion, because she cannot always be young. When the girls are twelve years old, which among them is the marriageable age, their parents or guardians take them home, with great expressions of gratitude to the professors, and seldom without tears of the young lady and her companions.

In the nurseries of females of the meaner sort, the children are instructed

in all kinds of works proper for their sex, and their several degrees: those intended for apprentices are dismissed at seven years old, the rest are kept to eleven.[1]

The meaner families who have children at these nurseries are obliged, besides their annual pension, which is as low as possible, to return to the steward of the nursery a small monthly share of their gettings, to be a portion for the child; and therefore all parents are limited in their expenses by the law. For the Lilliputians think nothing can be more unjust than for people, in subservience to their own appetites, to bring children into the world, and leave the burden of supporting them on the public. As to persons of quality, they give security to appropriate a certain sum for each child, suitable to their condition; and these funds are always managed with good husbandry and the most exact justice.

The cottagers and laborers keep their children at home, their business being only to till and cultivate the earth, and therefore their education is of little consequence to the public; but the old and diseased among them are supported by hospitals: for begging is a trade unknown in this empire.

And here it may, perhaps, divert the curious reader, to give some account of my domestic[2] and my manner of living in this country, during a residence of nine months and thirteen days. Having a head mechanically turned, and being likewise forced by necessity, I had made for myself a table and chair convenient enough, out of the largest trees in the royal park. Two hundred sempstresses were employed to make me shirts and linen for my bed and table, all of the strongest and coarsest kind they could get; which, however, they were forced to quilt together in several folds, for the thickest was some degrees finer than lawn. Their linen is usually three inches wide, and three foot make a piece. The sempstresses took my measure as I lay on the ground, one standing at my neck, and another at my mid-leg, with a strong cord extended, that each held by the end, while a third measured the length of the cord with a rule of an inch long. Then they measured my right thumb, and desired no more; for by a mathematical computation, that twice round the thumb is once round the wrist, and so on to the neck and the waist, and by the help of my old shirt, which I displayed on the ground before them for a pattern, they fitted me exactly. Three hundred tailors were employed in the same manner to make me clothes; but they had another contrivance for taking my measure. I kneeled down, and they raised a ladder from the ground to my neck; upon this ladder one of them mounted, and let fall a plumb-line from my collar to the floor, which just answered the length of my coat: but my waist and arms I measured myself. When my clothes were finished, which was done in my house (for the largest of theirs would not have been able to hold them), they looked like the patchwork made by the ladies in England, only that mine were all of a color.

I had three hundred cooks to dress my victuals, in little convenient huts built about my house, where they and their families lived, and prepared me two dishes apiece. I took up twenty waiters in my hand, and placed them on the table: an hundred more attended below on the ground, some with dishes of meat, and some with barrels of wine and other liquors slung on their shoulders; all which the waiters above drew up, as I wanted, in a very ingenious manner by certain cords, as we draw the bucket up a well in Europe. A dish of their meat

[1] The first edition has "nine" and "thirteen."

[2] domestic life

was a good mouthful, and a barrel of their liquor a reasonable draught. Their mutton yields to ours, but their beef is excellent. I have had a sirloin so large, that I have been forced to make three bits of it; but this is rare. My servants were astonished to see me eat it, bones and all, as in our country we do the leg of a lark. Their geese and turkeys I usually eat at a mouthful, and I must confess they far exceed ours. Of their smaller fowl, I could take up twenty or thirty at the end of my knife.

One day his Imperial Majesty, being informed of my way of living, desired that himself and his Royal Consort, with the young Princes of the blood of both sexes, might have the happiness, (as he was pleased to call it) of dining with me. They came accordingly, and I placed them upon chairs of state, on my table, just over against me, with their guards about them. Flimnap, the Lord High Treasurer, attended there likewise, with his white staff; and I observed he often looked on me with a sour countenance, which I would not seem to regard, but eat more than usual, in honor to my dear country, as well as to fill the court with admiration. I have some private reasons to believe that this visit from his Majesty gave Flimnap an opportunity of doing me ill offices to his master. That minister had always been my secret enemy, though he outwardly caressed me more than was usual to the moroseness of his nature. He represented to the Emperor the low condition of his treasury; that he was forced to take up money at great discount; that exchequer bills would not circulate under nine per cent. below par; that in short I had cost his Majesty above a million and a half of *sprugs* (their greatest gold coin, about the bigness of a spangle); and, upon the whole, that it would be advisable in the Emperor to take the first fair occasion of dismissing me.[1]

I am here obliged to vindicate the reputation of an excellent lady, who was an innocent sufferer upon my account. The Treasurer took a fancy to be jealous of his wife, from the malice of some evil tongues, who informed him that her Grace had taken a violent affection for my person; and the court-scandal ran for some time that she once came privately to my lodging. This I solemnly declare to be a most infamous falsehood, without any grounds, farther than that her Grace was pleased to treat me with all innocent marks of freedom and friendship. I own she came often to my house, but always publicly, nor ever without three more in the coach, who were usually her sister and young daughter, and some particular acquaintance; but this was common to many other ladies of the court. And I still appeal to my servants round, whether they at any time saw a coach at my door without knowing what persons were in it. On those occasions, when a servant had given me notice, my custom was to go immediately to the door; and, after paying my respects, to take up the coach and two horses very carefully in my hands, (for, if there were six horses, the postillion always unharnessed four) and place them on a table, where I had fixed a movable rim quite round, of five inches high, to prevent accidents. And I have often had four coaches and horses at once on my table full of company, while I sat in my chair leaning my face towards them; and when I was engaged with one set, the coachmen would gently drive the others round my table. I have passed many an afternoon very agreeably in these conversations. But I defy the Treasurer, or his two informers (I will name them, and let them make their best

[1] The Tories did not like some of Walpole's financial measures, possibly proposed to please his parsimonious king.

of it) Clustril and Drunlo, to prove that any person ever came to me *incognito,* except the secretary Reldresal, who was sent by express command of his Imperial Majesty, as I have before related. I should not have dwelt so long upon this particular, if it had not been a point wherein the reputation of a great lady is so nearly concerned, to say nothing of my own; though I then had the honor to be a *Nardac,* which the Treasurer himself is not; for all the world knows he is only a *Glumglum,* a title inferior by one degree, as that of a Marquis is to a Duke in England, although I allow he preceded me in right of his post. These false informations, which I afterwards came to the knowledge of, by an accident not proper to mention, made Flimnap, the Treasurer, show his lady for some time an ill countenance, and me a worse; and although he were at last undeceived and reconciled to her, yet I lost all credit with him, and found my interest decline very fast with the Emperor himself, who was indeed too much governed by that favorite.

CHAPTER VII

The Author, being informed of a design to accuse him of high-treason, makes his escape to Blefuscu. His reception there.

Before I proceed to give an account of my leaving this kingdom, it may be proper to inform the reader of a private intrigue which had been for two months forming against me.

I had been hitherto, all my life, a stranger to courts, for which I was unqualified by the meanness of my condition. I had indeed heard and read enough of the dispositions of great princes and ministers; but never expected to have found such terrible effects of them in so remote a country, governed, as I thought, by very different maxims from those in Europe.

When I was just preparing to pay my attendance on the Emperor of Blefuscu, a considerable person at court (to whom I had been very serviceable at a time when he lay under the highest displeasure of his Imperial Majesty) came to my house very privately at night, in a close chair, and, without sending his name, desired admittance. The chairmen were dismissed; I put the chair, with his Lordship in it, into my coat-pocket: and giving orders to a trusty servant to say I was indisposed and gone to sleep, I fastened the door of my house, placed the chair on the table, according to my usual custom, and sat down by it. After the common salutations were over, observing his Lordship's countenance full of concern, and inquiring into the reason, he desired I would hear him with patience in a matter that highly concerned my honor and my life. His speech was to the following effect, for I took notes of it as soon as he left me.

You are to know, said he, that several Committees of Council have been lately called, in the most private manner, on your account; [1] and it is but two days since his Majesty came to a full resolution.

You are very sensible that Skyresh Bolgolam (*Galbet,* or High-Admiral) hath been your mortal enemy almost ever since your arrival. His original reasons I know not; but his hatred is increased since your great success against Blefuscu, by which his glory as Admiral is much obscured. This lord, in conjunction with Flimnap, the High-Treasurer, whose enmity against you is notorious, Limtoc the General, Lalcon the Chamberlain, and

[1] In 1715 a committee of secrecy was appointed by the House of Commons, with Walpole as chairman. Their report resulted in the impeachment of Bolingbroke and Oxford.

Balmuff the Grand Judiciary, have prepared articles of impeachment against you, for treason and other capital crimes.

This preface made me so impatient, being conscious of my own merits and innocence, that I was going to interrupt; when he entreated me to be silent, and thus proceeded.

Out of gratitude for the favors you have done me, I procured information of the whole proceedings, and a copy of the articles, wherein I venture my head for your service.

ARTICLES OF IMPEACHMENT AGAINST QUINBUS FLESTRIN (THE MAN-MOUNTAIN)

* * *

Article II

That the said Quinbus Flestrin having brought the imperial fleet of Blefuscu into the royal port, and being afterwards commanded by his Imperial Majesty to seize all the other ships of the said empire of Blefuscu, and reduce that empire to a province, to be governed by a viceroy from hence, and to destroy and put to death not only all the Big-Endian exiles, but likewise all the people of that empire who would not immediately forsake the Big-Endian heresy: he, the said Flestrin, like a false traitor against his most Auspicious, Serene, Imperial Majesty, did petition to be excused from the said service, upon pretence of unwillingness to force the consciences, or destroy the liberties and lives of innocent people.

Article III

That whereas certain ambassadors arrived from the court of Blefuscu, to sue for peace in his Majesty's court: He, the said Flestrin, did, like a false traitor, aid, abet, comfort, and divert the said ambassadors, although he knew them to be servants to a Prince who was lately an open enemy to his Imperial Majesty, and in open war against his said Majesty.

Article IV

That the said Quinbus Flestrin, contrary to the duty of a faithful subject, is now preparing to make a voyage to the court and empire of Blefuscu, for which he hath received only verbal license from his Imperial Majesty; and, under color of the said license, does falsely and traitorously intend to take the said voyage, and thereby to aid, comfort, and abet the Emperor of Blefuscu, so late an enemy, and in open war with his Imperial Majesty aforesaid.

There are some other articles, but these are the most important, of which I have read you an abstract.

In the several debates upon this impeachment,[1] it must be confessed that his Majesty gave many marks of his great lenity, often urging the services you had done him, and endeavoring to extenuate your crimes. The Treasurer and Admiral insisted that you should be put to the most painful and ignominious death, by setting fire on your house at night; and the General was to attend with twenty thousand men, armed with poisoned arrows, to shoot you on the face and hands. Some of your servants were to have private orders to strew a poisonous juice on your shirts, which would soon make you tear your own flesh, and die in the utmost torture. The General came into the same opinion; so that for a long time there was a majority against you. But his Majesty resolving, if possible, to spare your life, at last brought off the Chamberlain.

[1] What follows is a bitterly ironic representation of Bolingbroke's impeachment.

Upon this incident, Reldresal, principal Secretary for private Affairs, who always approved himself your true friend, was commanded by the Emperor to deliver his opinion, which he accordingly did; and therein justified the good thoughts you have of him. He allowed your crimes to be great, but that still there was room for mercy, the most commendable virtue in a prince, and for which his Majesty was so justly celebrated. He said the friendship between you and him was so well known to the world, that perhaps the most honorable board might think him partial: however, in obedience to the command he had received, he would freely offer his sentiments. That if his Majesty, in consideration of your services, and pursuant to his own merciful disposition, would please to spare your life, and only give order to put out both your eyes, he humbly conceived that by this expedient justice might in some measure be satisfied, and all the world would applaud the lenity of the Emperor, as well as the fair and generous proceedings of those who have the honor to be his counsellors. That the loss of your eyes would be no impediment to your bodily strength, by which you might still be useful to his Majesty; that blindness is an addition to courage, by concealing dangers from us; that the fear you had for your eyes was the greatest difficulty in bringing over the enemy's fleet, and it would be sufficient for you to see by the eyes of the ministers, since the greatest princes do no more.

This proposal was received with the utmost disapprobation by the whole board. Bolgolam, the Admiral, could not preserve his temper; but rising up in a fury, said he wondered how the Secretary durst presume to give his opinion for preserving the life of a traitor: that the services you had performed were, by all true reasons of state, the great aggravation of your crimes; . . . that the same strength which enabled you to bring over the enemy's fleet might serve, upon the first discontent, to carry it back: that he had good reasons to think you were a Big-Endian in your heart; and, as treason begins in the heart before it appears in overt acts, so he accused you as a traitor on that account, and therefore insisted you should be put to death.

The Treasurer was of the same opinion; he showed to what straits his Majesty's revenue was reduced by the charge of maintaining you, which would soon grow insupportable: that the Secretary's expedient of putting out your eyes was so far from being a remedy against this evil, it would probably increase it, as it is manifest from the blinding some kind of fowl, after which they fed the faster and grew sooner fat: that his sacred Majesty and the Council, who are your judges, were in their own consciences fully convinced of your guilt, which was a sufficient argument to condemn you to death, without the formal proofs required by the strict letter of the law.

But his Imperial Majesty, fully determined against capital punishment, was graciously pleased to say that since the Council thought the loss of your eyes too easy a censure, some other may be inflicted hereafter. And your friend the Secretary, humbly desiring to be heard again, in answer to what the Treasurer had objected, concerning the great charge his Majesty was at in maintaining you, said that his Excellency, who had the sole disposal of the Emperor's revenue, might easily provide against that evil by gradually lessening your establishment; by which, for want of sufficient food, you would grow weak and faint, and lose your appetite, and consume in a few months; neither would the stench of your carcass be then so dangerous, when it should become more than half diminished; and

immediately upon your death, five or six thousand of his Majesty's subjects might in two or three days cut your flesh from your bones, take it away by cart-loads, and bury it in distant parts, to prevent infection, leaving the skeleton as a monument of admiration to posterity.

Thus by the great friendship of the Secretary the whole affair was compromised. It was strictly enjoined that the project of starving you by degrees should be kept a secret; but the sentence of putting out your eyes was entered on the books, none dissenting except Bolgolam the Admiral, who, being a creature of the Empress, was perpetually instigated by her Majesty to insist upon your death, she having borne perpetual malice against you. . . .

In three days your friend the Secretary will be directed to come to your house, and read before you the articles of impeachment; and then to signify the great lenity and favor of his Majesty and Council, whereby you are only condemned to the loss of your eyes, which his Majesty doth not question you will gratefully and humbly submit to; and twenty of his Majesty's surgeons will attend, in order to see the operation well performed, by discharging very sharp-pointed arrows into the balls of your eyes, as you lie on the ground.

I leave to your prudence what measures you will take; and to avoid suspicion, I must immediately return in as private manner as I came.

His Lordship did so; and I remained alone, under many doubts and perplexities of mind.

It was a custom introduced by this prince and his ministry (very different, as I have been assured, from the practices of former times), that after the court had decreed any cruel execution, either to gratify the monarch's resentment or the malice of a favorite, the Emperor always made a speech to his whole Council, expressing his great lenity and tenderness as qualities known and confessed by all the world. This speech was immediately published through the kingdom; nor did anything terrify the people so much as those encomiums on his Majesty's mercy; because it was observed that the more those praises were enlarged and insisted on, the more inhuman was the punishment, and the sufferer more innocent. And as to myself, I must confess, having never been designed for a courtier, either by my birth or education, I was so ill a judge of things that I could not discover the lenity and favor of this sentence, but conceived it (perhaps erroneously) rather to be rigorous than gentle. I sometimes thought of standing my trial, for, although I could not deny the facts alleged in the several articles, yet I hoped they would admit of some extenuation. But having in my life perused many state trials, which I ever observed to terminate as the judges thought fit to direct, I durst not rely on so dangerous a decision, in so critical a juncture, and against such powerful enemies. Once I was strongly bent upon resistance, for, while I had liberty, the whole strength of that empire could hardly subdue me, and I might easily with stones pelt the metropolis to pieces; but I soon rejected that project with horror, by remembering the oath I had made to the Emperor, the favors I received from him, and the high title of *Nardac* he conferred upon me. Neither had I so soon learned the gratitude of courtiers, to persuade myself that his Majesty's present severities acquitted me of all past obligations.

At last I fixed upon a resolution, for which it is probable I may incur some censure, and not unjustly; for I confess I owe the preserving of mine eyes, and consequently my liberty, to my own great

rashness and want of experience: because, if I had then known the nature of princes and ministers, which I have since observed in many other courts, and their methods of treating criminals less obnoxious than myself, I should with great alacrity and readiness have submitted to so easy a punishment. But hurried on by the precipitancy of youth, and having his Imperial Majesty's license to pay my attendance upon the Emperor of Blefuscu, I took this opportunity, before the three days were elapsed, to send a letter to my friend the Secretary, signifying my resolution of setting out that morning for Blefuscu, pursuant to the leave I had got; and, without waiting for an answer, I went to that side of the island where our fleet lay. I seized a large man-of-war, tied a cable to the prow, and lifting up the anchors, I stripped myself, put my clothes (together with my coverlet, which I carried under my arm) into the vessel, and drawing it after me, between wading and swimming, arrived at the royal port of Blefuscu, where the people had long expected me: [1] they lent me two guides to direct me to the capital city, which is of the same name. I held them in my hands till I came within two hundred yards of the gate, and desired them to signify my arrival to one of the secretaries, and let him know I there waited his Majesty's command. I had an answer in about an hour, that his Majesty, attended by the Royal Family, and great officers of the court, was coming out to receive me. I advanced a hundred yards. The Emperor and his train alighted from their horses, the Empress and ladies from their coaches, and I did not perceive they were in any fright or concern. I lay on the ground to kiss his Majesty's and the Empress's hand. I told his Majesty that I was come according to my promise, and with the license of the Emperor my master, to have the honor of seeing so mighty a monarch, and to offer him any service in my power, consistent with my duty to my own prince; not mentioning a word of my disgrace, because I had hitherto no regular information of it, and might suppose myself wholly ignorant of any such design; neither could I reasonably conceive that the Emperor would discover the secret while I was out of his power: wherein, however, it soon appeared I was deceived.

I shall not trouble the reader with the particular account of my reception at this court, which was suitable to the generosity of so great a prince; nor of the difficulties I was in for want of a house and bed, being forced to lie on the ground, wrapped up in my coverlet.

[1] The French were expecting Bolingbroke.

CHAPTER VIII

The Author, by a lucky accident, finds means to leave Blefuscu; and, after some difficulties, returns safe to his native country.

Three days after my arrival, walking out of curiosity to the northeast coast of the island, I observed, about half a league off in the sea, somewhat that looked like a boat overturned. I pulled off my shoes and stockings, and wading two or three hundred yards, I found the object to approach nearer by force of the tide; and then plainly saw it to be a real boat, which I supposed might by some tempest have been driven from a ship; whereupon I returned immediately towards the city, and desired his Imperial Majesty to lend me twenty of the tallest vessels he had left after the loss of his fleet, and three thousand seamen under the command of his Vice-Admiral. This fleet sailed round, while I went back the shortest way to the coast, where I first

discovered the boat; I found the tide had driven it still nearer. The seamen were all provided with cordage, which I had beforehand twisted to a sufficient strength. When the ships came up, I stripped myself, and waded till I came within an hundred yards of the boat, after which I was forced to swim till I got up to it. The seamen threw me the end of the cord, which I fastened to a hole in the forepart of the boat, and the other end to a man-of-war; but I found all my labor to little purpose; for, being out of my depth, I was not able to work. In this necessity I was forced to swim behind, and push the boat forwards, as often as I could, with one of my hands; and the tide favoring me, I advanced so far that I could just hold up my chin and feel the ground. I rested two or three minutes, and then gave the boat another shove, and so on, till the sea was no higher than my arm-pits; and now the most laborious part being over, I took out my other cables, which were stowed in one of the ships, and fastened them first to the boat, and then to nine of the vessels which attended me; the wind being favorable, the seamen towed, and I shoved, till we arrived within forty yards of the shore; and waiting till the tide was out, I got dry to the boat, and by the assistance of two thousand men with ropes and engines, I made a shift to turn it on its bottom, and found it was but little damaged.

I shall not trouble the reader with the difficulties I was under, by the help of certain paddles, which cost me ten days' making, to get my boat to the royal port of Blefuscu, where a mighty concourse of people appeared upon my arrival, full of wonder at the sight of so prodigious a vessel. I told the Emperor that my good fortune had thrown this boat in my way, to carry me to some place from whence I might return into my native country; and begged his Majesty's orders for getting materials to fit it up; together with his license to depart; which, after some kind expostulations, he was pleased to grant.

I did very much wonder, in all this time, not to have heard of any express relating to me from our Emperor to the court of Blefuscu. But I was afterwards given privately to understand that his Imperial Majesty, never imagining I had the least notice of his designs, believed I was only gone to Blefuscu in performance of my promise, according to the license he had given me, which was well known at our court, and would return in a few days, when that ceremony was ended. But he was at last in pain at my long absence; and after consulting with the Treasurer and the rest of that cabal, a person of quality was dispatched with the copy of the articles against me. This envoy had instructions to represent to the monarch of Blefuscu the great lenity of his master, who was content to punish me no farther than with the loss of my eyes; that I had fled from justice, and if I did not return in two hours, I should be deprived of my title of *Nardac*, and declared a traitor. The envoy further added, that in order to maintain the peace and amity between both empires, his master expected that his brother of Blefuscu would give orders to have me sent back to Lilliput, bound hand and foot, to be punished as a traitor.

The Emperor of Blefuscu, having taken three days to consult, returned an answer consisting of many civilities and excuses. He said that as for sending me bound, his brother knew it was impossible; that although I had deprived him of his fleet, yet he owed great obligations to me for many good offices I had done him in making the peace; that, however, both their Majesties would soon be made easy; for I had found a prodigious vessel on the

shore, able to carry me on the sea, which he had given order to fit up, with my own assistance and direction; and he hoped, in a few weeks, both empires would be freed from so insupportable an incumbrance.

With this answer the envoy returned to Lilliput, and the monarch of Blefuscu related to me all that had passed; offering me at the same time (but under the strictest confidence) his gracious protection, if I would continue in his service; wherein although I believed him sincere, yet I resolved never more to put any confidence in princes or ministers, where I could possibly avoid it; and therefore, with all due acknowledgments for his favorable intentions, I humbly begged to be excused. I told him that since fortune, whether good or evil, had thrown a vessel in my way, I was resolved to venture myself on the ocean, rather than be an occasion of difference between two such mighty monarchs. Neither did I find the Emperor at all displeased; and I discovered, by a certain accident, that he was very glad of my resolution, and so were most of his ministers.

These considerations moved me to hasten my departure somewhat sooner than I intended; to which the court, impatient to have me gone, very readily contributed. Five hundred workmen were employed to make two sails to my boat, according to my directions, by quilting thirteen fold of their strongest linen together. I was at the pains of making ropes and cables, by twisting ten, twenty, or thirty of the thickest and strongest of theirs. A great stone that I happened to find, after a long search, by the seashore, served me for an anchor. I had the tallow of three hundred cows, for greasing my boat, and other uses. I was at incredible pains in cutting down some of the largest timber trees for oars and masts, wherein I was, however, much assisted by his Majesty's ship-carpenters, who helped me in smoothing them, after I had done the rough work.

In about a month, when all was prepared, I sent to receive his Majesty's commands, and to take my leave. The Emperor and Royal Family came out of the palace, I lay down on my face to kiss his hand, which he very graciously gave me: so did the Empress and young Princes of the blood. His Majesty presented me with fifty purses of two hundred *sprugs* apiece, together with his picture at full length, which I put immediately into one of my gloves, to keep it from being hurt. The ceremonies at my departure were too many to trouble the reader with at this time.

I stored the boat with the carcasses of an hundred oxen and three hundred sheep, with bread and drink proportionable, and as much meat ready-dressed as four hundred cooks could provide. I took with me six cows and two bulls alive, with as many ewes and rams, intending to carry them into my own country, and propagate the breed. And to feed them on board, I had a good bundle of hay and a bag of corn. I would gladly have taken a dozen of the natives, but this was a thing the Emperor would by no means permit; and, besides a diligent search into my pockets, his Majesty engaged my honor not to carry away any of his subjects, although with their own consent and desire.

Having thus prepared all things as well as I was able, I set sail, on the twenty-fourth day of September, 1701, at six in the morning; and when I had gone about four leagues to the northward, the wind being at southeast, at six in the evening I descried a small island about half a league to the northwest. I advanced forward, and cast anchor on the lee side of the island, which seemed to be uninhabited. I then took some refreshment, and went to my rest. I slept well, and I

conjecture at least six hours, for I found the day broke in two hours after I awaked. It was a clear night. I eat my breakfast before the sun was up; and heaving anchor, the wind being favorable, I steered the same course that I had done the day before, wherein I was directed by my pocket-compass. My intention was to reach, if possible, one of those islands which I had reason to believe lay on the northeast of Van Diemen's Land. I discovered nothing all that day; but upon the next, about three in the afternoon, when I had by my computation made twenty-four leagues from Blefuscu, I descried a sail steering to the southeast; my course was due east. I hailed her, but could get no answer; yet I found I gained upon her, for the wind slackened. I made all the sail I could, and in half an hour she spied me, then hung out her ancient,[1] and discharged a gun. It is not easy to express the joy I was in, upon the unexpected hope of once more seeing my beloved country, and the dear pledges I had left in it. The ship slackened her sails, and I came up with her between five and six in the evening, September 26; but my heart leaped within me to see her English colors. I put my cows and sheep into my coat-pockets, and got on board with all my little cargo of provisions. The vessel was an English merchantman, returning from Japan by the North and South seas; the Captain, Mr. John Biddel of Deptford, a very civil man and an excellent sailor. We were now in the latitude of 30 degrees south; there were about fifty men in the ship; and here I met an old comrade of mine, one Peter Williams, who gave me a good character to the Captain. This gentleman treated me with kindness, and desired I would let him know what place I came from last, and whither I was bound; which I did in a few words, but he thought I was raving, and that the dangers I had underwent had disturbed my head; whereupon I took my black cattle and sheep out of my pocket, which, after great astonishment, clearly convinced him of my veracity. I then showed him the gold given me by the Emperor of Blefuscu, together with his Majesty's picture at full length, and some other rarities of that country. I gave him two purses of two hundred *sprugs* each, and promised, when we arrived in England, to make him a present of a cow, and a sheep big with young.

I shall not trouble the reader with a particular account of this voyage, which was very prosperous for the most part. We arrived in the Downs on the 13th of April, 1702. I had only one misfortune, that the rats on board carried away one of my sheep; I found her bones in a hole, picked clean from the flesh. The rest of my cattle I got safe ashore, and set them a-grazing in a bowling-green at Greenwich, where the fineness of the grass made them feed very heartily, though I had always feared the contrary: neither could I possibly have preserved them in so long a voyage, if the captain had not allowed me some of his best biscuit, which, rubbed to powder, and mingled with water, was their constant food. The short time I continued in England, I made a considerable profit by showing my cattle to many persons of quality and others: and before I began my second voyage I sold them for six hundred pounds. Since my last return I find the breed is considerably increased, especially the sheep, which I hope will prove much to the advantage of the woollen manufacture, by the fineness of the fleeces.

I stayed but two months with my wife and family; for my insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries would suffer me to continue no longer. I left fifteen hundred pounds with my wife, and fixed her

[1] flag

in a good house at Redriff.[1] My remaining stock I carried with me, part in money and part in goods, in hopes to improve my fortunes. My eldest uncle John had left me an estate in land near Epping of about thirty pounds a year; and I had a long lease of the Black Bull in Fetter-lane, which yielded me as much more; so that I was not in any danger of leaving my family upon the parish. My son Johnny, named so after his uncle, was at the Grammar School, and a towardly child. My daughter Betty (who is now well married, and has children) was then at her needlework. I took leave of my wife and boy and girl, with tears on both sides, and went on board the *Adventure,* a merchant ship of three hundred tons, bound for Surat, Captain John Nicholas, of Liverpool, Commander. But my account of this voyage must be referred to the second part of my Travels

[1] On the Thames, just below London.

THE LETTER: CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS

THE letter as a distinct literary form has the advantages of the familiar essay in its most informal guise. It affords the writer free range to discuss a topic as informally as he please and to comment upon what he has experienced of life frankly from his own prejudices and opinions. Whether or not it be written with a view to publication, it sets up confidential relations with the person to whom it is addressed that permit of the freest expression of ideas. To make interesting reading for others, however, it must be above the commonplace, must contain observations of value, and must, above all else, be phrased with distinction and with lightness of touch.

It is not strange that such a literary form should have flourished in the leisurely eighteenth century, with its intense interest in things that lay ready to hand. Literary taste then demanded, not imagination or emotion, but the rational qualities of common sense, proportion, taste, and elegance of form: "What oft was thought but ne'er so well expressed." Numerous poets, from Pope to Robert Burns, expressed themselves in rimed epistles; Richardson, in his feeling for realism, used the letter form for unfolding the story of *Pamela* (1740), the first modern novel of character. And a group of brilliant figures in the world of letters of that time revealed themselves and their age in series of letters: Lady Mary Montagu, Horace Walpole, and Philip Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773).

Chesterfield was an able statesman, an orator with a reputation for both wit and eloquence, and a social figure who was well known as a shrewd man of the world, exceedingly well mannered, and clever. He wrote his famous *Letters to His Son* (published in 1774) without any intention of giving them to the world. They were addressed to his illegitimate son Philip Stanhope, to whom he was devoted, and were wholly confidential. They start when the boy was but five years old and continue throughout his young manhood, changing in style and tone as the youth grew in understanding. Although a habit of repetition, noticeable even in selections, becomes at times a little annoying, there is much information on geography and history, much interesting reflection on the customs of the day, much advice on living. Dress, etiquette, and manners are emphasized as matters of importance, but beneath all is found a philosophy that to be happy one must be considerate of the feelings of others and must make his conduct square with his sense of what is right.

PHILIP STANHOPE, EARL OF CHESTERFIELD (1694–1773)

LETTERS TO HIS SON

Letter V

I told you, my dear, that I would send you some stories to amuse you; I therefore now give you the history of the siege of Troy, which is very entertaining. Homer, an ancient Greek poet, has wrote upon this subject the finest epic poem that ever was. By the way, you are to know that an epic poem is a long poem upon some great event, or upon the actions of some great man.

The siege of Troy is so very famous for having lasted ten years, and also upon account of the great number of heroes who were there, that one must by no means be ignorant of such an event. When you are older, you will read it all in the Greek of Homer.

Adieu! you are the best child in the world.

I return you your letter corrected; for though it had but few faults, it is, however, proper that you should know them.

Letter VI

Cause of the war between the Greeks and Trojans and of the besieging and taking of Troy

Heaven and earth were at peace, and the gods and goddesses enjoyed the most perfect tranquillity; when the goddess Discord, who delights in confusion and quarrels, displeased at this universal calm, resolved to excite dissensions. In order to effect this, she threw among the goddesses a golden apple, upon which these words were written, "To the fairest." Immediately each of the goddesses wanted to have the apple, and each said she was the handsomest, for goddesses are as anxious about their beauty as mere mortal ladies. The strife was, however, more particularly between Juno, the wife of Jupiter; Venus, the goddess of love; and Pallas, the goddess of arts and sciences. At length they agreed to be judged by a shepherd, named Paris, who fed his flocks upon Mount Ida, and was, however, son of Priam, king of Troy. They appeared all three before Paris, and quite naked; for, in order to judge critically, and to determine equitably, it is requisite that all should be seen. Juno offered him the grandeurs of the world, if he would decide in her favor; Pallas promised him arts and sciences; but Venus, who tempted him with the most beautiful woman in the universe, prevailed, and he gave her the apple.

You may easily imagine how glad Venus was, and how angry Juno and Pallas were. Venus, in order to perform her promise ordered him to go to Menelaus, in Greece, whose wife, named Helena, would fall in love with him: accordingly he went, and was kindly entertained by Menelaus; but soon after, Paris ran away with Helena, and carried her off to Troy. Menelaus, irritated at this injurious breach of hospitality, complained to his brother Agamemmon, king of Mycene, who engaged the Greeks to avenge the affront. Ambassadors were sent to Troy, to demand the restitution of Helena, and, in case of denial, to declare war. Paris refused to restore her, upon which war was declared. It lasted ten years. I shall very soon send you the history of it.

Letter L

Dear Boy: I send you here a few more Latin roots, though I am not sure you will like my roots so well as those that grow in your garden; however, if you will attend to them, they may save you a great deal

of trouble. These few will naturally point out many others to your own observation; and enable you, by comparison, to find out most derived and compound words, when once you know the original root of them. You are old enough now to make observations upon what you learn; which, if you would be pleased to do, you cannot imagine how much time and trouble it would save you. Remember you are now very near nine years old; an age at which all boys ought to know a great deal, but you, particularly, a great deal more, considering the care and pains that have been employed about you; and, if you do not answer those expectations, you will lose your character, which is the most mortifying thing that can happen to a generous mind. Everybody has ambition of some kind or other, and is vexed when that ambition is disappointed: the difference is, that the ambition of silly people is a silly and mistaken ambition; and the ambition of people of sense is a right and commendable one. For instance, the ambition of a silly boy of your age would be to have fine clothes, and money to throw away in idle follies: which, you plainly see, would be no proofs of merit in him, but only a folly in his parents, in dressing him out like a jackanapes, and giving him money to play the fool with. Whereas, a boy of good sense places his ambition in excelling other boys of his own age, and even older, in virtue and knowledge. His glory is in being known always to speak the truth, in showing good nature and compassion, in learning quicker, and applying himself more than other boys. These are real proofs of merit in him, and consequently proper objects of ambition; and will acquire him a solid reputation and character. This holds true in men as well as in boys; the ambition of a silly fellow will be to have a fine equipage, a fine house, and fine clothes; things which anybody that has as much money may have as well as he, for they are all to be bought; but the ambition of a man of sense and honor is, to be distinguished by a character and reputation of knowledge, truth, and virtue; things which are not to be bought, and that can only be acquired by a good head and a good heart. Such was the ambition of the Lacedemonians and the Romans, when they made the greatest figure; and such, I hope, yours will always be. Adieu.

Letter LV

Wednesday.

Dear Boy: You behaved yourself so well at Mr. Boden's last Sunday, that you justly deserve commendation: besides, you encourage me to give you some rules of politeness and good breeding, being persuaded that you will observe them. Know then, that as learning, honor, and virtue, are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind; politeness and good-breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life. Great talents, such as honor, virtue, learning, and parts, are above the generality of the world; who neither possess them themselves, nor judge of them rightly in others; but all people are judges of the lesser talents such as civility, affability, and an obliging, agreeable address and manner; because they feel the good effects of them, as making society easy and pleasing. Good sense, must, in many cases, determine good-breeding; because the same thing that would be civil at one time, and to one person, may be quite otherwise at another time, and to another person; but there are some general rules of good-breeding, that hold always true, and in all cases. As, for example, it is always extremely rude, to answer only yes, or no, to any-

body, without adding sir, my lord, or madam, according to the quality of the person you speak to: as, in French, you must always say, Monsieur, Milord, Madame, and Mademoiselle. I suppose you know that every married woman is, in French, Madame, and every unmarried one is Mademoiselle. It is likewise extremely rude, not to give the proper attention, and a civil answer when people speak to you; or to go away, or be doing something else while they are speaking to you; for that convinces them that you despise them, and do not think it worth your while to hear or answer what they say. I dare say I need not tell you how rude it is, to take the best place in a room, or to seize immediately upon what you like at table, without offering first to help others; as if you considered nobody but yourself. On the contrary, you should always endeavor to procure all the conveniences you can to the people you are with. Besides being civil, which is absolutely necessary, the perfection of good breeding, is to be civil with ease, and in a gentleman-like manner. For this, you should observe the French people, who excel in it, and whose politeness seems as easy and natural as any other part of their conversation. Whereas the English are often awkward in their civilities, and, when they mean to be civil, are too much ashamed to get it out. But, pray do you remember never to be ashamed of doing what is right; you would have a great deal of reason to be ashamed if you were not civil; but what reason can you have to be ashamed of being civil? And why not say a civil and obliging thing, as easily and as naturally as you would ask what o'clock it is? This kind of bashfulness, which is justly called by the French, *mauvaise honte*,[1] is the distinguishing character of an English booby; who is frightened out of his wits when people of fashion speak to him; and, when he is to answer them, blushes, stammers, can hardly get out what he would say; and becomes really ridiculous, from a groundless fear of being laughed at: whereas a real well-bred man would speak to all the kings in the world, with as little concern, and as much ease, as he would speak to you.

Remember, then, that to be civil, and to be civil with ease (which is properly called good-breeding), is the only way to be beloved, and well received in company; that to be ill-bred, and rude, is intolerable, and the way to be kicked out of company; and that to be bashful, is to be ridiculous. As I am sure you will mind and practise all this, I expect that when you are *novennis*,[2] you will not only be the best scholar, but the best-bred boy in England at your age. Adieu.

[1] literally "bad shame"

Letter LIX

Spa, July 25, 1741.

Dear Boy: I have often told you in my former letters (and it is most certainly true) that the strictest and most scrupulous honor and virtue can alone make you esteemed and valued by mankind; that parts and learning can alone make you admired and celebrated by them; but that the possession of lesser talents was most absolutely necessary, towards making you liked, beloved, and sought after in private life. Of these lesser talents, good breeding is the principal and most necessary one, not only as it is very important in itself, but as it adds great lustre to the more solid advantages both of the heart and the mind. I have often touched upon good breeding to you before; so that this letter shall be upon the next necessary qualification to it, which is a genteel, easy manner and carriage, wholly free from those odd

[2] nine years old

tricks, ill habits, and awkwardnesses, which even many very worthy and sensible people have in their behavior. However trifling a genteel manner may sound, it is of very great consequence towards pleasing in private life, especially the women, which, one time or other, you will think worth pleasing; and I have known many a man from his awkwardness, give people such a dislike of him at first, that all his merit could not get the better of it afterwards. Whereas a genteel manner prepossesses people in your favor, bends them towards you, and makes them wish to be like you. Awkwardness can proceed but from two causes; either from not having kept good company, or from not having attended to it. As for your keeping good company, I will take care of that; do you take care to observe their ways and manners, and to form your own upon them. Attention is absolutely necessary for this, as indeed it is for everything else; and a man without attention is not fit to live in the world. When an awkward fellow first comes into a room, it is highly probable that his sword gets between his legs, and throws him down, or makes him stumble, at least; when he has recovered this accident, he goes and places himself in the very place of the whole room where he should not; there he soon lets his hat fall down, and, in taking it up again, throws down his cane; in recovering his cane, his hat falls a second time, so that he is a quarter of an hour before he is in order again. If he drinks tea or coffee, he certainly scalds his mouth, and lets either the cup or the saucer fall, and spills the tea or coffee in his breeches. At dinner, his awkwardness distinguishes itself particularly, as he has more to do; there he holds his knife, fork, and spoon, differently from other people; eats with his knife to the great danger of his mouth, picks his teeth with his fork, and puts his spoon, which has been in his throat twenty times, into the dishes again. If he is to carve, he can never hit the joint: but, in his vain efforts to cut through the bone, scatters the sauce in everybody's face. He generally daubs himself with soup and grease, though his napkin is commonly stuck through a button-hole, and tickles his chin. When he drinks, he infallibly coughs in his glass, and besprinkles the company. Besides all this, he has strange tricks and gestures; such as snuffing up his nose, making faces, putting his finger in his nose, or blowing it and looking afterwards in his handkerchief, so as to make the company sick. His hands are troublesome to him, when he has not something in them, and he does not know where to put them; but they are in perpetual motion between his bosom and his breeches; he does not wear his clothes, and in short does nothing like other people. All this, I own, is not in any degree criminal; but it is highly disagreeable and ridiculous in company, and ought most carefully to be avoided, by whoever desires to please.

From this account of what you should not do, you may easily judge what you should do; and a due attention to the manners of people of fashion, and who have seen the world, will make it habitual and familiar to you.

There is, likewise, an awkwardness of expression and words, most carefully to be avoided; such as false English, bad pronunciation, old sayings, and common proverbs; which are so many proofs of having kept bad and low company. For example, if, instead of saying that tastes are different, and that every man has his own peculiar one, you should let off a proverb, and say, That what is one man's meat is another man's poison: or else, Every one as they like, as the good man

said when he kissed his cow; everybody would be persuaded that you had never kept company with anybody above footmen and housemaids.

Attention will do all this, and without attention nothing is to be done; want of attention, which is really want of thought, is either folly or madness. You should not only have attention to everything, but a quickness of attention, so as to observe, at once, all the people in the room, their motions, their looks, and their words, and yet without staring at them, and seeming to be an observer. This quick and unobserved observation is of infinite advantage in life, and is to be acquired with care; and, on the contrary, what is called absence, which is thoughtlessness, and want of attention about what is doing, makes a man so like either a fool or a madman, that, for my part, I see no real difference. A fool never has thought; a madman has lost it; and an absent man is, for the time, without it.

Adieu! direct your next to me, *chez Monsieur Chabert, Banquier, à Paris;* and take care that I find the improvements I expect at my return.

Letter LXIX

Bath, June 28, 1742.

Dear Boy: Your promises give me great pleasure; and your performance of them, which I rely upon, will give me still greater. I am sure you know that breaking of your word is a folly, a dishonor, and a crime. It is a folly, because nobody will trust you afterwards; and it is both a dishonor and a crime, truth being the first duty of religion and morality; and whoever has not truth, cannot be supposed to have any good quality, and must become the detestation of God and man. Therefore I expect, from your truth and your honor, that you will do that, which, independently of your promise, your own interest and ambition ought to incline you to do; that is to excel in everything you undertake. When I was of your age, I should have been ashamed if any boy of that age had learned his book better, or played at any play better than I did; and I would not have rested a moment till I had got before him. Julius Cæsar, who had a noble thirst of glory, used to say, that he would rather be the first in a village than the second in Rome; and he even cried when he saw the statue of Alexander the Great, with the reflection of how much more glory Alexander had acquired, at thirty years old, than he had at a much more advanced age. These are the sentiments to make people considerable; and those who have them not, will pass their lives in obscurity and contempt; whereas, those who endeavor to excel all, are at least sure of excelling a great many. The sure way to excel in any thing is only to have a close and undissipated attention while you are about it; and then you need not be half the time that otherwise you must be; for long plodding, puzzling application is the business of dulness: but good parts attend regularly, and take a thing immediately. Consider, then, which you would choose; to attend diligently while you are learning, and thereby excel all other boys, get a great reputation, and have a great deal more time to play; or else not mind your book, let boys even younger than yourself get before you, be laughed at by them for a dunce, and have no time to play at all; for, I assure you, if you will not learn, you shall not play. What is the way, then, to arrive at that perfection which you promise me to aim at? It is, first, to do your duty towards God and man, without which everything else signifies nothing; secondly, to acquire great knowledge, without which you will be a very contemptible

man, though you may be a very honest one; and, lastly, to be very well bred, without which you will be a very disagreeable, unpleasing man, though you should be an honest and learned one.

Remember then these three things, and resolve to excel in them all; for they comprehend whatever is necessary and useful for this world or the next; and in proportion as you improve in them you will enjoy the affection and tenderness of, Yours.

Letter LXXI

Saturday.

Sir: The fame of your erudition, and other shining qualifications, having reached to Lord Orrery, he desired me, that you might dine with him and his son, Lord Boyle, next Sunday; which I told him you should. By this time, I suppose, you have heard from him; but, if you have not, you must however go there between two and three tomorrow, and say, that you come to wait upon Lord Boyle, according to his Lordship's orders, which I informed you of. As this will deprive me of the honor and pleasure of your company at dinner tomorrow, I will hope for it at breakfast, and shall take care to have your chocolate ready.

Though I need not tell one of your age, experience, and knowledge of the world, how necessary good-breeding is, to recommend one to mankind; yet as your various occupations of Greek and cricket, Latin and pitch-farthing, may possibly divert your attention from this object, I take the liberty of reminding you of it, and desiring you to be very well-bred at Lord Orrery's. It is good-breeding alone that can prepossess people in your favor at first sight, more time being necessary to discover greater talents. This good-breeding, you know, does not consist in low bows and formal ceremony; but in an easy, civil and respectful behavior. You will, therefore, take care to answer with complaisance, when you are spoken to; to place yourself at the lower end of the table, unless bid to go higher; to drink first to the lady of the house, and next to the master; not to eat awkwardly or dirtily; not to sit when others stand: and to do all this with an air of complaisance, and not with a grave, sour look, as if you did it all unwillingly. I do not mean a silly, insipid smile, that fools have when they would be civil; but an air of sensible good-humor. I hardly know anything so difficult to attain, or so necessary to possess, as perfect good-breeding; which is equally inconsistent with a still formality, and impertinent forwardness, and an awkward bashfulness. A little ceremony is often necessary; a certain degree of firmness is absolutely so; and an outward modesty is extremely becoming; the knowledge of the world, and your own observations, must, and alone can tell you the proper quantities of each.

Mr. Fitzgerald was with me yesterday, and commended you much: go on to deserve commendations, and you will certainly meet with them. Adieu.

Letter LXXIV

Dublin Castle, November 19, 1745.

Dear Boy: I have received your last Saturday's performance, with which I am very well satisfied. I know or have heard of no Mr. St. Maurice here; and young Pain, whom I have made an ensign, was here upon the spot, as were every one of those I have named in these new levies.

Now that the Christmas breaking-up draws near, I have ordered Mr. Desnoyers to go to you, during that time, to teach you to dance. I desire you will particularly attend to the graceful motion of your arms; which, with the manner of putting on your hat, and giving your

hand, is all that a gentleman need attend to. Dancing is in itself a very trifling, silly thing; but it is one of those established follies to which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform; and then they should be able to do it very well. And, though I would not have you a dancer, yet, when you do dance, I would have you dance well, as I would have you do everything you do well. There is no one thing so trifling, but which (if it is to be done at all) ought to be done well; and I have often told you, that I wished you even played at pitch, and cricket, better than any boy at Westminster. For instance, dress is a very foolish thing, and yet it is a very foolish thing for a man not to be well dressed, according to his rank and way of life; and it is so far from being a disparagement to any man's understanding, that it is rather a proof of it, to be as well dressed as those with whom he lives: the difference in this case between a man of sense and a fop, is, that the fop values himself upon his dress, and the man of sense laughs at it, at the same time that he knows he must not neglect it. There are a thousand foolish customs of this kind, which, not being criminal, must be complied with, and even cheerfully, by men of sense. Diogenes the Cynic was a wise man for despising them, but a fool for showing it. Be wiser than other people, if you can; but do not tell them so.

It is a very fortunate thing for Sir Charles Hotham, to have fallen into the hands of one of your age, experience, and knowledge of the world: I am persuaded you will take infinite care of him. Good night.

Letter LXXVIII

April 5, 1746.

Dear Boy: Before it is very long, I am of opinion that you will both think and speak more favorably of woman than you do now. You seem to think that from Eve downwards, they have done a great deal of mischief. As for that lady, I give her up to you: but since her time, history will inform you, that men have done much more mischief in the world than women; and, to say the truth, I would not advise you to trust either, more than is absolutely necessary. But this I will advise you to, which is, never to attack whole bodies of any kind; for, besides that all general rules have their exceptions, you must unnecessarily make yourself a great number of enemies, by attacking a corps collectively. Among women, as among men, there are good as well as bad; and it may be full as many, or more, good than among men. This rule holds as to lawyers, soldiers, parsons, courtiers, citizens, etc. They are all men, subject to the same passions and sentiments, differing only in the manner, according to their several educations; and it would be as imprudent as unjust to attack any of them by the lump. Individuals forgive sometimes; but bodies and societies never do. Many young people think it very genteel and witty to abuse the clergy; in which they are extremely mistaken: since in my opinion, parsons are very like men, and neither the better nor the worse for wearing a black gown. All general reflections, upon nations and societies, are the trite, thread-bare jokes of those who set up for wit without having any, and so have recourse to commonplace. Judge of individuals from your own knowledge of them, and not from their sex, profession, or denomination.

Though at my return, which I hope will be very soon, I shall not find your feet lengthened, I hope I shall find your head a good deal so, then I shall not mind your feet. In two or three months after my return, you and I shall part for

some time; you must go to read men as well as books, of all languages and nations. Observation and reflection will then be very necessary to you. We will talk this matter over fully when we meet; which I hope will be in the last week of this month; till when, I have the honor of being.

Your most faithful servant.

Letter LXXXI

Bath, October 9, 1746.

Dear Boy: Your distresses in your journey from Heidelberg to Schaffhausen, your lying upon straw, your black bread, and your broken berline,[1] are proper seasonings for the greater fatigues and distresses, which you must expect in the course of your travels; and, if one had a mind to moralize, one might call them the samples of the accidents, rubs, and difficulties, which every man meets with in his journey through life. In this journey, the understanding is the voiture[2] that must carry you through; and in proportion as that is stronger or weaker, more or less in repair, your journey will be better or worse; though at best you will now and then find some bad roads, and some bad inns. Take care, therefore, to keep that necessary voiture in perfect good repair; examine, improve, and strengthen it every day: it is in the power, and ought to be the care of every man to do it; he that neglects it, deserves to feel, and certainly will feel, the fatal effects of that negligence.

Apropos of negligence; I must say something to you upon that subject. You know I have often told you, that my affection for you was not a weak, womanish one; and, far from blinding me, it makes me but more quick-sighted as to your faults; those it is not only my right, but my duty to tell you of; and it is your duty and your interest to correct them. In the strict scrutiny which I have made into you, I have (thank God) hitherto not discovered any vice of the heart, or any peculiar weakness of the head: but I have discovered laziness, inattention, and indifference; faults which are only pardonable in old men, who, in the decline of life, when health and spirits fail, have a kind of claim to that sort of tranquillity. But a young man should be ambitious to shine, and excel; alert, active, and indefatigable in the means of doing it; and like Cæsar,[3] *Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum.*[3] You seem to want that *vivida vis animi,*[4] which spurs and excites most young men to please, to shine, to excel. Without the desire and the pains necessary to be considerable, depend upon it, you never can be so; as, without the desire and attention necessary to please, you never can please. *Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia,*[5] is unquestionably true, with regard to everything except poetry; and I am very sure that any man of common understanding may, by proper culture, care, attention, and labor, make himself whatever he pleases, except a good poet. Your destination is the great and busy world; your immediate object is the affairs, the interests, and the history, the constitutions, the customs, and the manners of the several parts of Europe. In this, any man of common sense may, by common application, be sure to excel. Ancient and modern history are, by attention, easily attainable. Geography and chronology the same; none of them requiring any uncommon share of genius or invention. Speaking and writing, clearly, correctly, and with ease and grace,

[1] A four-wheeled carriage with a separate seat behind the body.
[2] vehicle
[3] Considering nothing done if anything remained to be done.
[4] lively animation
[5] No divine assistance is needed if you have discretion.

are certainly to be acquired, by reading the best authors with care, and by attention to the best living models. These are the qualifications more particularly necessary for you, in your department, which you may be possessed of, if you please; and which, I tell you fairly, I shall be very angry at you, if you are not; because, as you have the means in your hands, it will be your own fault only.

If care and application are necessary to the acquiring of those qualifications, without which you can never be considerable, nor make a figure in the world; they are not less necessary with regard to the lesser accomplishments, which are requisite to make you agreeable and pleasing in society. In truth, whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well; and nothing can be done well without attention: I therefore carry the necessity of attention down to the lowest things, even to dancing and dress. Custom has made dancing sometimes necessary for a young man; therefore mind it while you learn it, that you may learn to do it well, and not be ridiculous, though in a ridiculous act. Dress is of the same nature; you must dress; therefore attend to it; not in order to rival or to excel a fop in it, but in order to avoid singularity, and consequently ridicule. Take great care always to be dressed like the reasonable people of your own age, in the place where you are; whose dress is never spoken of one way or another, as either too negligent or too much studied.

What is commonly called an absent man, is commonly either a very weak, or a very affected man; but be he which he will, he is, I am sure, a very disagreeable man in company. He fails in all the common offices of civility; he seems not to know those people to-day, with whom yesterday he appeared to live in intimacy. He takes no part in the general conversation; but, on the contrary, breaks into it from time to time, with some start of his own, as if he waked from a dream. This (as I said before) is a sure indication, either of a mind so weak that it is not able to bear above one object at a time; or so affected, that it would be supposed to be wholly engrossed by, and directed to, some very great and important objects. Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Locke,[1] and (it may be) five or six more, since the creation of the world, may have had a right to absence, from that intense thought which the things they were investigating required. But if a young man, and a man of the world, who has no such avocations to plead, will claim and exercise that right of absence in company, his pretended right should, in my mind, be turned into an involuntary absence, by his perpetual exclusion out of company. However frivolous a company may be, still while you are among them, do not show them, by your inattention, that you think them so; but rather take their tone, and conform in some degree to their weakness, instead of manifesting your contempt for them. There is nothing that people bear more impatiently, or forgive less, than contempt; and an injury is much sooner forgotten than an insult. If therefore you would rather please than offend, rather be well than ill spoken of, rather be loved than hated; remember to have that constant attention about you, which flatters every man's little vanity; and the want of which, by mortifying his pride, never fails to excite his resentment, or at least his ill will. For instance, most people (I might say all people) have their weaknesses; they have their aversions and their likings, to such or such things; so that, if you were to laugh at a man for his aversion to a cat, or cheese, (which are common antipathies) or, by inattention and negligence,

[1] A famous philosopher of the eighteenth century.

to let them come in his way, where you could prevent it, he would, in the first case, think himself insulted, and, in the second, slighted, and would remember both. Whereas your care to procure for him what he likes, and to remove from him what he hates, shows him that he is at least an object of your attention; flatters his vanity, and makes him possibly more your friend, than a more important service would have done. With regard to women, attentions still below these are necessary, and, by the custom of the world, in some measure due, according to the laws of good-breeding.

My long and frequent letters, which I send you, in great doubt of their success, put me in mind of certain papers, which you have very lately, and I formerly, sent up to kites, along the string, which we called messengers; some of them the wind used to blow away, others were torn by the string, and but few of them got up and stuck to the kite. But I will content myself now, as I did then, if some of my present messengers do but stick to you. Adieu!

Letter LXXXVII

London, March 27, 1747.

Dear Boy: Pleasure is the rock which most young people split upon: they launch out with crowded sails in quest of it, but without a compass to direct their course, or reason sufficient to steer the vessel; for want of which, pain and shame, instead of pleasure, are the returns of their voyage. Do not think that I mean to snarl at pleasure, like a Stoic, or to preach against, like a parson; no, I mean to point it out, and recommend it to you, like an Epicurean: I wish you a great deal; and my only view is to hinder you from mistaking it.

The character which most young men first aim at is, that of a man of pleasure; but they generally take it upon trust; and instead of consulting their own taste and inclinations, they blindly adopt whatever those with whom they chiefly converse, are pleased to call by the name of pleasure; and a *man of pleasure*, in the vulgar acceptation of that phrase, means only, a beastly drunkard, an abandoned whore-master, and a profligate swearer and curser. As it may be of use to you, I am not unwilling, though at the same time ashamed, to own, that the vices of my youth proceeded much more from my silly resolution of being what I heard called a man of pleasure, than from my own inclinations. I always naturally hated drinking; and yet I have often drunk, with disgust at the time, attended by great sickness the next day, only because I then considered drinking as a necessary qualification for a fine gentleman, and a man of pleasure.

The same as to gaming. I did not want money, and consequently had no occasion to play for it; but I thought play another necessary ingredient in the composition of a man of pleasure, and accordingly I plunged into it without desire, at first; sacrificed a thousand real pleasures to it; and made myself solidly uneasy by it, for thirty the best years of my life.

I was even absurd enough, for a little while, to swear, by way of adorning and completing the shining character which I affected; but this folly I soon laid aside, upon finding both the guilt and the indecency of it.

Thus seduced by fashion, and blindly adopting nominal pleasures, I lost real ones; and my fortune impaired, and my constitution shattered, are, I must confess, the just punishment of my errors.

Take warning then by them: choose your pleasures for yourself, and do not let them be imposed upon you. Follow nature and not fashion: weigh the present enjoyment of your pleasures

against the necessary consequences of them, and then let your own common sense determine your choice.

Were I to begin the world again, with the experience which I now have of it, I would lead a life of real, not of imaginary pleasure. I would enjoy the pleasures of the table, and of wine; but stop short of the pains inseparably annexed to an excess of either. I would not, at twenty years, be a preaching missionary of abstemiousness and sobriety; and I should let other people do as they would, without formally and sententiously rebuking them for it; but I would be most firmly resolved not to destroy my own faculties and constitution in complaisance to those who have no regard to their own. I would play to give me pleasure, but not to give me pain; that is, I would play for trifles, in mixed companies, to amuse myself, and conform to custom; but I would take care not to venture for sums; which, if I won, I should not be the better for; but, if I lost, should be under a difficulty to pay; and when paid, would oblige me to retrench in several other articles. Not to mention the quarrels which deep play commonly occasions.

I would pass some of my time in reading, and the rest in the company of people of sense and learning, and chiefly those above me; and I would frequent the mixed companies of men and women of fashion, which, though often frivolous, yet they unbend and refresh the mind, not uselessly, because they certainly polish and soften the manners.

These would be my pleasures and amusements, if I were to live the last thirty years over again; they are rational ones; and, moreover, I will tell you, they are really the fashionable ones; for the others are not, in truth, the pleasures of what I call people of fashion, but of those who only call themselves so. Does good company care to have a man reeling drunk among them? Or to see another tearing his hair, and blaspheming, for having lost, at play, more than he is able to pay? Or a whore-master with half a nose, and crippled by coarse and infamous debauchery? No; those who practise, and much more those who brag of them, make no part of good company; and are most unwillingly, if ever, admitted into it. A real man of fashion and pleasures observes decency; at least neither borrows nor affects vices; and if he unfortunately has any, he gratifies them with choice, delicacy, and secrecy.

I have not mentioned the pleasures of the mind, (which are the solid and permanent ones), because they do not come under the head of what people commonly call pleasures; which they seem to confine to the senses. The pleasure of virtue, of charity, and of learning, is true and lasting pleasure; with which I hope you will be well and long acquainted. Adieu.

Letter XCIV

London, Sept. 21, 1747.

Dear Boy: I received, by the last post, your letter of the 8th, N.S., and I do not wonder that you were surprised at the credulity and superstition of the Papists at Einsiedlen, and at their absurd stories of their chapel. But remember, at the same time, that errors and mistakes, however gross, in matters of opinion, if they are sincere, are to be pitied, but not punished nor laughed at. The blindness of the understanding is as much to be pitied, as the blindness of the eyes; and there is neither jest nor guilt in a man's losing his way in either case. Charity bids us set him right if we can, by arguments and persuasions; but charity, at the same time, forbids, either to punish or ridicule his misfortune. Every man's reason is, and must be, his guide; and

I may as well expect that every man should be of my size and complexion, as that he should reason just as I do. Every man seeks for truth; but God only knows who has found it. It is, therefore, as unjust to persecute, as it is absurd to ridicule, people for those several opinions, which they cannot help entertaining upon the conviction of their reason. It is the man who tells, or who acts a lie, that is guilty, and not he who honestly and sincerely believes the lie. I really know nothing more criminal, more mean, and more ridiculous than lying. It is the production either of malice, cowardice, or vanity; and generally misses of its aim in every one of these views; for lies are always detected sooner or later. If I tell a malicious lie, in order to affect any man's fortune or character, I may indeed injure him for some time; but I shall be sure to be the greatest sufferer myself at last; for, as soon as ever I am detected, (and detected I most certainly shall be,) I am blasted for the infamous attempt; and whatever is said afterwards, to the disadvantage of that person, however true, passes for calumny. If I lie, or equivocate (for it is the same thing) in order to excuse myself for something that I have said or done, and to avoid the danger or the shame that I apprehend from it, I discover at once my fear as well as my falsehood; and only increase, instead of avoiding, the danger and the shame; I show myself to be the lowest and the meanest of mankind, and am sure to be always treated as such. Fear, instead of avoiding, invites danger; for concealed cowards will insult known ones. If one has had the misfortune to be in the wrong, there is something noble in frankly owning it; it is the only way of atoning for it, and the only way of being forgiven. Equivocating, evading, shuffling, in order to remove a present danger or inconveniency, is something so mean, and betrays so much fear, that whoever practises them always deserves to be, and often will be kicked. There is another sort of lies, inoffensive enough in themselves, but wonderfully ridiculous; I mean those lies which a mistaken vanity suggests, that defeat the very end for which they are calculated, and terminate in the humiliation and confusion of their author, who is sure to be detected. These are chiefly narrative and historical lies, all intended to do infinite honor to their author. He is always the hero of his own romances; he has been in dangers from which nobody but himself ever escaped; he has seen with his own eyes, whatever other people have heard or read of: he has had more *bonnes fortunes*[1] than ever he knew women; and has ridden more miles post in one day, than ever courier went in two. He is soon discovered, and as soon becomes the object of universal contempt and ridicule. Remember, then, as long as you live, that nothing but strict truth can carry you through the world, with either your conscience or your honor unwounded. It is not only your duty, but your interest: as a proof of which you may always observe, that the greatest fools are the greatest liars. For my own part, I judge of every man's truth by his degree of understanding.

This letter will, I suppose, find you at Leipsig; where I expect and require from you attention and accuracy, in both which you have hitherto been very deficient. Remember that I shall see you in the summer; shall examine you most narrowly; and will never forget nor forgive those faults, which it has been in your own power to prevent or cure; and be assured that I have many eyes upon you at Leipsig, besides Mr. Harte's. Adieu!

[1] conquests

Letter XCVII

London, Oct. 16, 1747.

Dear Boy: The art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess; but a very difficult one to acquire. It can hardly be reduced to rules; and your own good sense and observation will teach you more of it than I can. Do as you would be done by, is the surest method that I know of pleasing. Observe carefully what pleases you in others, and probably the same thing in you will please others. If you are pleased with the complaisance and attention of others to your humors, your tastes, or your weaknesses, depend upon it the same complaisance and attention, on your part to theirs, will equally please them. Take the tone of the company that you are in, and do not pretend to give it; be serious, gay, or even trifling, as you find the present humor of the company; this is an attention due from every individual to the majority. Do not tell stories in company; there is nothing more tedious and disagreeable; if by chance you know a very short story, and exceedingly applicable to the present subject of conversation, tell it in as few words as possible; and even then, throw out that you do not love to tell stories; but that the shortness of it tempted you. Of all things, banish the egotism out of your conversation, and never think of entertaining people with your own personal concerns, or private affairs; though they are interesting to you, they are tedious and impertinent to everybody else; besides that, one cannot keep one's own private affairs too secret. Whatever you think your own excellencies may be, do not affectedly display them in company; nor labor, as many people do, to give that turn to the conversation, which may supply you with an opportunity of exhibiting them. If they are real, they will infallibly be discovered, without your pointing them out yourself, and with much more advantage. Never maintain an argument with heat and clamor, though you think or know yourself to be in the right: but give your opinion modestly and coolly, which is the only way to convince; and, if that does not do, try to change the conversation, by saying, with good humor, "We shall hardly convince one another, nor is it necessary that we should, so let us talk of something else."

Remember that there is a local propriety to be observed in all companies; and that what is extremely proper in one company, may be, and often is, highly improper in another.

The jokes, the *bon mots*,[1] the little adventures, which may do very well in one company, will seem flat and tedious, when related in another. The particular characters, the habits, the cant of one company, may give merit to a word, or a gesture, which would have none at all if divested of those accidental circumstances. Here people very commonly err; and fond of something that has entertained them in one company, and in certain circumstances, repeat it with emphasis in another, where it is either insipid, or, it may be, offensive, by being ill-timed or misplaced. Nay, they often do it with this silly preamble; "I will tell you an excellent thing;" or, "I will tell you the best thing in the world." This raises expectations, which, when absolutely disappointed, make the relator of this excellent thing look, very deservedly, like a fool.

If you would particularly gain the affection and friendship of particular people, whether men or women, endeavor to find out their predominant excellency, if they have one, and their prevailing weakness, which everybody has; and do justice to the one, and something more than

[1] witticisms

justice to the other. Men have various objects in which they may excel, or at least would be thought to excel; and, though they love to hear justice done to them, where they know that they excel, yet they are most and best flattered upon those points where they wish to excel, and yet are doubtful whether they do or not. As, for example, Cardinal Richelieu, who was undoubtedly the ablest statesman of his time, or perhaps of any other, had the idle vanity of being thought the best poet too; he envied the great Corneille his reputation, and ordered a criticism to be written upon the *Cid*. Those, therefore, who flattered skilfully, said little to him of his abilities in state affairs, or at least but *en passant*,[1] and as it might naturally occur. But the incense which they gave him, the smoke of which they knew would turn his head in their favor, was as a *bel esprit*[2] and a poet. Why? Because he was sure of one excellency, and distrustful as to the other. You will easily discover every man's prevailing vanity, by observing his favorite topic of conversation; for every man talks most of what he has most a mind to be thought to excel in. Touch him but there, and you touch him to the quick. The late Sir Robert Walpole (who was certainly an able man) was little open to flattery upon that head; for he was in no doubt himself about it; but his prevailing weakness was, to be thought to have a polite and happy turn to gallantry; of which he had undoubtedly less than any man living: it was his favorite and frequent subject of conversation, which proved, to those who had any penetration, that it was his prevailing weakness. And they applied to it with success.

Women have, in general, but one object, which is their beauty; upon which, scarce any flattery is too gross for them to swallow. Nature has hardly formed a woman ugly enough to be insensible to flattery upon her person; if her face is so shocking, that she must in some degree be conscious of it, her figure and her air, she trusts, make ample amends for it. If her figure is deformed, her face, she thinks, counterbalances it. If they are both bad, she comforts herself that she has graces; a certain manner; a *je ne sais quoi*,[3] still more engaging than beauty. This truth is evident, from the studied and elaborate dress of the ugliest women in the world. An undoubted, uncontested, conscious beauty, is of all women, the least sensible of flattery upon that head; she knows that it is her due, and is therefore obliged to nobody for giving it her. She must be flattered upon her understanding; which, though she may possibly not doubt of herself, yet she suspects that men may distrust.

Do not mistake me, and think that I mean to recommend to you abject and criminal flattery: no; flatter nobody's vices or crimes: on the contrary, abhor and discourage them. But there is no living in the world without a complaisant indulgence for people's weaknesses, and innocent, though ridiculous vanities. If a man has a mind to be thought wiser, and a woman handsomer than they really are, their error is a comfortable one to themselves, and an innocent one with regard to other people; and I would rather make them my friends, by indulging them in it, than my enemies, by endeavoring (and that to no purpose) to undeceive them.

There are little attentions likewise, which are infinitely engaging, and which sensibly affect that degree of pride and self-love, which is inseparable from human nature; as they are unquestionable proofs of the regard and consideration which we have for the persons to whom we pay them. As, for example, to observe the

[1] incidentally [2] wit [3] an indefinite something

little habits, the likings, the antipathies, and the tastes of those whom we would gain; and then take care to provide them with the one, and to secure them from the other; giving them, genteelly, to understand, that you had observed that they liked such a dish, or such a room; for which reason you had prepared it: or, on the contrary, that having observed they had an aversion to such a dish, a dislike to such a person, etc., you had taken care to avoid presenting them. Such attention to such trifles flatters self-love much more than greater things, as it makes people think themselves almost the only objects of your thoughts and care.

These are some of the *arcana*[1] necessary for your initiation in the great society of the world. I wish I had known them better at your age; I have paid the price of three-and-fifty years for them, and shall not grudge it, if you reap the advantage. Adieu.

Letter CXXIX

London, Sept. 5, 1748.

Dear Boy: I have received yours, with the inclosed German letter to Mr. Grevenkop, which he assures me is extremely well written, considering the little time that you have applied yourself to that language. As you have now got over the most difficult part, pray go on diligently, and make yourself absolutely master of the rest. Whoever does not entirely possess a language, will never appear to advantage, or even equal to himself, either in speaking or writing it. His ideas are fettered, and seem imperfect or confused, if he is not master of all the words and phrases necessary to express them. I therefore desire, that you will not fail writing a German letter once every fortnight to Mr. Grevenkop; which will make the writing of that language familiar to you; and moreover, when you shall have left Germany, and be arrived at Turin, I shall require you to write even to me in German; that you may not forget, with ease, what you have with difficulty learned. I likewise desire, that while you are in Germany, you will take all opportunities of conversing in German, which is the only way of knowing that, or any other language, accurately. You will also desire your German master to teach you the proper titles and superscriptions to be used to people of all ranks; which is a point so material, in Germany, that I have known many a letter returned, unopened, because one title in twenty has been omitted in the direction.

St. Thomas's day draws near, when you are to leave Saxony and go to Berlin; and I take it for granted, that if anything is yet wanting to complete your knowledge of the state of that Electorate, you will not fail to procure it before you go away. I do not mean, as you will easily believe, the number of churches, parishes, or towns; but I mean the constitution, the revenues, the troops, and the trade of that Electorate. A few questions, sensibly asked, of sensible people, will produce you the necessary informations; which I desire you will enter in your little book. Berlin will be entirely a new scene to you, and I look upon it, in a manner, as your first step into the great world; take care that step be not a false one, and that you do not stumble at the threshold. You will there be in more company than you have yet been; manners and attentions will therefore be more necessary. Pleasing in company, is the only way of being pleased in it yourself. Sense and knowledge are the first and necessary foundations for pleasing in company; but they will by no means do alone, and they will never be perfectly welcome, if they are not accompanied

[1] secrets

with manners and attentions. You will best acquire these by frequenting the companies of people of fashion; but then you must resolve to acquire them, in those companies, by proper care and observation; for I have known people, who, though they have frequented good company all their lifetime, have done it in so inattentive and unobserving a manner, as to be never the better for it, and to remain as disagreeable, as awkward, and as vulgar, as if they had never seen any person of fashion. When you go into good company (by good company is meant the people of the first fashion of the place) observe carefully their turn, their manners, their address; and conform your own to them. But this is not all neither; go deeper still; observe their characters, and pry, as far as you can, into both their hearts and their heads. Seek for their particular merit, their predominant passion, or their prevailing weakness; and you will then know what to bait your hook with, to catch them. Man is a composition of so many, and such various ingredients, that it requires both time and care to analyze him: for though we have all the same ingredients in our general composition, as reason, will, passions, and appetites; yet the different proportions and combinations of them in each individual, produce that infinite variety of characters, which, in some particular or other, distinguishes every individual from another. Reason ought to direct the whole, but seldom does. And he who addresses himself singly to another's man's reason, without endeavoring to engage his heart in his interest also, is no more likely to succeed, than a man who should apply only to a king's nominal minister, and neglect his favorite. I will recommend to your attentive perusal, now that you are going into the world, two books, which will let you as much into the characters of men, as books can do. I mean, *Les Reflexions Morales de Monsieur de la Rochefoucault*,[1] and *Les Caractères de la Bruyère:*[2] but remember, at the same time, that I only recommend them to you as the best general maps, to assist you in your journey, and not as marking out every particular turning and winding that you will meet with. There your own sagacity and observation must come to their aid. La Rochefoucault is, I know, blamed, but I think without reason, for deriving all our actions from the source of self-love. For my part, I see a great deal of truth, and no harm at all, in that opinion. It is certain, that we seek our own happiness in everything we do; and it is as certain, that we can only find it in doing well, and in conforming all our actions to the rule of right reason, which is the great law of nature. It is only a mistaken self-love that is a blameable motive, when we take the immediate and indiscriminate gratification of a passion, or appetite, for real happiness. But am I blameable, if I do a good action, upon account of the happiness which that honest consciousness will give me? Surely not. On the contrary, that pleasing consciousness is a proof of my virtue. The reflection, which is the most censured in Monsieur de la Rochefoucault's book, as a very ill-natured one, is this: *On trouve dans le malheur de son meilleur ami, quelque chose qui ne déplait pas.*[3] And why not? Why may I not feel a very tender and real concern for the misfortune of my friend, and yet at the same time feel a pleasing consciousness at having discharged my duty to him, by comforting and assisting him to the utmost of my power in that misfortune? Give me but virtuous actions, and I will not quibble and chicane about the motives. And I

[1] French moralist (1613-1680)
[2] French essayist and moralist (1645-1696)
[3] One finds something not unpleasant in the misfortune of his best friend

will give anybody their choice of these two truths, which amount to the same thing; He who loves himself best is the honestest man; or, The honestest man loves himself best.

The characters of La Bruyère are pictures from the life; most of them finely drawn, and highly colored. Furnish your mind with them first, and when you meet with their likeness, as you will every day, they will strike you the more. You will compare every feature with the original; and both will reciprocally help you to discover the beauties and the blemishes.

As women are a considerable, or at least a pretty numerous part of company; and as their suffrages go a great way towards establishing a man's character, in the fashionable part of the world (which is of great importance to the fortune and figure he proposes to make in it), it is necessary to please them. I will therefore, upon this subject, let you into certain *Arcana,* that will be very useful for you to know, but which you must, with the utmost care, conceal; and never seem to know. Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle, and sometimes wit; but for solid, reasoning, good sense, I never knew in my life one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four-and-twenty hours together. Some little passion or humor always breaks upon their best resolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increased, or their supposed understandings depreciated, instantly kindles their little passions, and overturns any system of consequential conduct, that in their most reasonable moments they might have been capable of forming. A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly, froward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with serious matters; though he often makes them believe that he does both; which is the thing in the world that they are proud of; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business (which, by the way, they always spoil); and being justly distrustful, that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks more seriously to them, and who seems to consult and trust them; I say, who seems; for weak men really do, but wise ones only seem to do it. No flattery is either too high or too low for them. They will greedily swallow the highest, and gratefully accept of the lowest; and you may safely flatter any woman, from her understanding, down to the exquisite taste of her fan. Women who are either indisputably beautiful, or indisputably ugly, are best flattered upon the score of their understandings; but those who are in a state of mediocrity, are best flattered upon their beauty, or at least their graces; for every woman who is not absolutely ugly thinks herself handsome; but not hearing often that she is so, is the more grateful, and the more obliged to the few who tell her so: whereas a decided and conscious beauty looks upon every tribute paid to her beauty only as her due; but wants to shine, and to be considered on the side of her understanding; and a woman who is ugly enough to know that she is so, knows that she has nothing left for it but her understanding, which is, consequently, (and probably in more senses than one), her weak side. But these are secrets, which you must keep inviolably, if you would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex: on the contrary, a man, who thinks of living in the great world, must be gallant, polite and attentive to please the women. They have, from the weakness of men, more or less influence in all courts; they absolutely stamp every man's

character in the *beau monde*,[1] and make it either current, or cry it down, and stop it in payments. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to manage, please and flatter them: and never to discover the least marks of contempt, which is what they never forgive; but in this they are not singular, for it is the same with men; who will much sooner forgive an injustice than an insult. Every man is not ambitious, or courteous, or passionate; but every man has pride enough in his composition to feel and resent the least slight and contempt. Remember, therefore, most carefully to conceal your contempt, however just, wherever you would not make an implacable enemy. Men are much more unwilling to have their weaknesses and their imperfections known, than their crimes; and if you hint to a man that you think him silly, ignorant, or even ill-bred, or awkward, he will hate you more and longer than if you tell him plainly that you think him a rogue. Never yield to that temptation, which to most young men is very strong, of exposing other people's weaknesses and infirmities, for the sake either of diverting the company, or showing your own superiority. You may get the laugh on your side by it for the present; but you will make enemies by it for ever; and even those who laugh with you then, will, upon reflection, fear, and consequently hate you: besides that it is ill-natured, and a good heart desires rather to conceal than expose other people's weaknesses or misfortunes. If you have wit, use it to please, and not to hurt: you may shine, like the sun in the temperate zones, without scorching. Here it is wished for; under the Line [2] it is dreaded.

These are some of the hints which my long experience in the great world enables me to give you; and which, if you attend to them, may prove useful to you in your journey through it. I wish it may be a prosperous one; at least, I am sure that it must be your own fault if it is not.

Make my compliments to Mr. Harte, who, I am very sorry to hear, is not well. I hope by this time he is recovered. Adieu!

[1] fashionable society [2] Equator

Letter CXXXIV

Bath, Oct. 19, 1748.

Dear Boy: Having, in my last, pointed out what sort of company you should keep, I will now give you some rules for your conduct in it; rules which my own experience and observation enable me to lay down, and communicate to you, with some degree of confidence. I have often given you hints of this kind before, but then it has been by snatches; I will now be more regular and methodical. I shall say nothing with regard to your bodily carriage and address, but leave them to the care of your dancing-master, and to your own attention to the best models; remember, however, that they are of consequence.

Talk often, but never long: in that case, if you do not please, at least you are sure not to tire your hearers. Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company, this being one of the very few cases in which people do not care to be treated, every one being fully convinced that he has wherewithal to pay.

Tell stories very seldom, and absolutely never but where they are very apt and very short. Omit every circumstance that is not material, and beware of digressions. To have frequent recourse to narrative betrays great want of imagination.

Never hold anybody by the button, or the hand, in order to be heard out: for, if people are not willing to hear you, you had much better hold your tongue than them.

Most long talkers single out some one unfortunate man in company (commonly him whom they observe to be the most silent, or their next neighbor), to whisper, or at least in a half voice, to convey a continuity of words to. This is excessively ill-bred, and, in some degree, a fraud; conversation-stock being a joint and common property. But, on the other hand, if one of these unmerciful talkers lays hold of you, hear him with patience (and at least seeming attention), if he is worth obliging; for nothing will oblige him more than a patient hearing, as nothing would hurt him more than either to leave him in the midst of his discourse, or to discover your impatience under your affliction.

Take, rather than give, the tone of the company you are in. If you have parts, you will show them, more or less, upon every subject; and if you have not, you had better talk sillily upon a subject of other people's than of your own choosing.

Avoid as much as you can, in mixed companies, argumentative, polemical conversations; which though they should not, yet certainly do, indispose, for a time, the contending parties towards each other; and, if the controversy grows warm and noisy, endeavor to put an end to it, by some genteel levity or joke. I quieted such a conversation-hub-bub once, by representing to them that though I was persuaded none there present would repeat, out of company, what passed in it, yet I could not answer for the discretion of the passengers in the street, who must necessarily hear all that was said.

Above all things, and upon all occasions, avoid speaking of yourself, if it be possible. Such is the natural pride and vanity of our hearts, that it perpetually breaks out, even in people of the best parts, in all the various modes and figures of the egotism.

Some, abruptly, speak advantageously of themselves, without either pretence or provocation. They are impudent. Others proceed more artfully, as they imagine; and forge accusations against themselves, complain of calumnies which they never heard, in order to justify themselves, by exhibiting a catalogue of their many virtues. They acknowledge it may, indeed, seem odd, that they should talk in that manner of themselves; it is what they do not like, and what they never would have done; no, no tortures should ever have forced it from them, if they had not been thus unjustly and monstrously accused. But, in these cases, justice is surely due to one's self, as well as to others; and when our character is attacked, we may say in our own justification, what otherwise we never would have said. This thin veil of Modesty drawn before Vanity, is much too transparent to conceal it, even from very moderate discernment.

Others go more modestly and more slyly still (as they think) to work; but, in my mind, still more ridiculously. They confess themselves (not without some dedegree of shame and confusion) into all the Cardinal Virtues; by first degrading them into weaknesses, and then owning their misfortune, in being made up of those weaknesses. They cannot see people suffer, without sympathizing with, and endeavoring to help them. They cannot see people want, without relieving them, though, truly, their own circumstances cannot very well afford it. They cannot help speaking truth, though they know all the imprudence of it. In short, they know that, with all these weaknesses, they are not fit to live in the world, much less to thrive in it. But they are now too old to change, and must rub on as well as they can. This sounds too ridiculous and *outré*,[1] almost, for the stage; and yet, take my word for it, you will fre-

[1] out of place

quently meet with it, upon the common stage of the world. And here I will observe, by the by, that you will often meet with characters in nature, so extravagant that a discreet poet would not venture to see them upon the stage in their true and high coloring.

This principle of vanity and pride is so strong in human nature that it descends even to the lowest objects; and one often sees people angling for praise, where, admitting all they say to be true (which by the way, it seldom is), no just praise is to be caught. One man affirms that he has rode post an hundred miles in six hours; probably it is a lie: but supposing it to be true, what then? Why, he is a very good post-boy, that is all. Another asserts, and probably not without oaths, that he has drank six or eight bottles of wine at a sitting; out of charity, I will believe him a liar; for, if I do not, I must think him a beast.

Such, and a thousand more, are the follies and extravagances, which vanity draws people into, and which always defeat their own purpose; and as Waller says, upon another subject,

> Make the wretch the most despised,
> Where most he wishes to be prized.

The only sure way of avoiding these evils, is never to speak of yourself at all. But when, historically, you are obliged to mention yourself, take care not to drop one single word, that can directly or indirectly be construed as fishing for applause. Be your character what it will, it will be known; and nobody will take it upon your own word. Never imagine that anything you can say yourself will varnish your defects, or add luster to your perfections; but, on the contrary, it may, and nine times in ten will, make the former more glaring, and the latter obscure. If you are silent upon your own subject, neither envy, indignation, nor ridicule, will obstruct or allay the applause which you may really deserve; but if you publish your own panegyric upon any occasion, or in any shape whatsoever, and however artfully dressed or disguised, they will all conspire against you, and you will be disappointed of the very end you aim at.

Take care never to seem dark and mysterious; which is not only a very unamiable character, but a very suspicious one too; if you seem mysterious with others, they will be really so with you, and you will know nothing. The height of abilities is to have *volto sciolto*[1] and *pensieri stretti;*[2] that is, a frank, open, and ingenuous exterior, with a prudent and reserved interior; to be upon your own guard, and yet, by a seeming natural openness, to put people off of theirs. Depend upon it, nine in ten of every company you are in will avail themselves of every indiscreet and unguarded expression of yours, if they can turn it to their own advantage. A prudent reserve is therefore as necessary as a seeming openness is prudent. Always look people in the face when you speak to them: the not doing is thought to imply conscious guilt; besides that you lose the advantage of observing by their countenances what impression your discourse makes upon them. In order to know people's real sentiments, I trust much more to my eyes than to my ears: for they can say whatever they have a mind I should hear; but they can seldom help looking, what they have no intention that I should know.

Neither retail nor receive scandal, willingly; defamation of others may, for the present, gratify the malignity of the pride of our hearts, cool reflection will draw very disadvantageous conclusions from such a disposition; and in the case of scandal, as in that of robbery, the receiver is always thought as bad as the thief.

[1] an open countenance [2] close thoughts

Mimicry, which is the common and favorite amusement of little, low minds, is in the utmost contempt with great ones. It is the lowest and most illiberal of all buffoonery. Pray, neither practise it yourself, nor applaud it in others. Besides that, the person mimicked is insulted; and, as I have often observed to you before, an insult is never forgiven.

I need not (I believe) advise you to adapt your conversation to the people you are conversing with: for I suppose you would not without this caution, have talked upon the same subject, and in the same manner to a minister of state, a bishop, a philosopher, a captain, and a woman. A man of the world must, like the Chameleon, be able to take every different hue; which is by no means a criminal or abject, but a necessary complaisance; for it relates only to manners and not to morals.

One word only, as to swearing, and that, I hope and believe, is more than is necessary. You may sometimes hear some people, in good company, interlard their discourse with oaths, by way of embellishment, as they think, but you must observe, too, that those who do so, are never those who contribute, in any degree, to give that company the denomination of good company. They are always subalterns, or people of low education; for that practice, besides that it has no one temptation to plead, is as silly, and as illiberal, as it is wicked.

Loud laughter is the mirth of the mob, who are only pleased with silly things; for true wit or good sense never excited a laugh, since the creation of the world. A man of parts and fashion is therefore only seen to smile, but never heard to laugh.

But to conclude this long letter; all the above-mentioned rules, however carefully you may observe them, will lose half their effect, if unaccompanied by the graces. Whatever you say, if you say it with a supercilious, cynical face, or an embarrassed countenance, or a silly, disconcerted grin, will be ill received. If, into the bargain, *you mutter it, or utter it indistinctly and ungracefully,* it will be still worse received. If your air and address are vulgar, awkward, and *gauche,* you may be esteemed indeed, if you have great intrinsic merit; but you will never please; and without pleasing, you will rise but heavily. Venus, among the ancients, was synonymous with the Graces, who were always supposed to accompany her; and Horace tells us, that even Youth, and Mercury, the God of Arts and Eloquence, would not do without her.

Parum comis sine te Juventas
Mercuriusque.

They are not inexorable Ladies, and may be had, if properly and diligently pursued. Adieu.

Letter CXLI

London, Dec. 30, 1748.

Dear Boy: I direct this letter to Berlin, where, I suppose, it will either find you, or at least wait but a very little time for you. I cannot help being anxious for your success, at this your first appearance upon the great stage of the world; for, though the spectators are always candid enough to give great allowances, and to show great indulgence to a new actor; yet, from the first impressions which he makes upon them, they are apt to decide, in their own minds, at least, whether he will ever be a good one, or not. If he seems to understand what he says, by speaking it properly; if he is attentive to his part, instead of staring negligently about him; and if, upon the whole, he seems ambitious to please, they willingly pass over little awkwardnesses

and inaccuracies, which they ascribe to a commendable modesty in a young and inexperienced actor. They pronounce that he will be a good one in time; and, by the encouragement which they give him, make him so the sooner. This, I hope, will be your case: you have sense enough to understand your part; a constant attention, and ambition to excel in it, with a careful observation of the best actors, will inevitably qualify you, if not for the first, at least for considerable parts.

Your dress (as insignificant a thing as dress is in itself) is now become an object worthy of some attention; for, I confess, I cannot help forming some opinion of a man's sense and character from his dress; and I believe most people do as well as myself. Any affectation whatsoever in dress, implies, in my mind, a flaw in the understanding. Most of our young fellows here display some character or other by their dress; some affect the tremendous, and wear a great and fiercely cocked hat, an enormous sword, a short waistcoat and a black cravat; these I should be almost tempted to swear the peace against, in my own defense, if I were not convinced that they are but meek asses in lions' skins. Others go in brown frocks, leather breeches, great oaken cudgels in their hands, their hats uncocked, and their hair unpowdered; and imitate grooms, stage-coachmen, and country bumpkins so well, in their outsides, that I do not make the least doubt of their resembling them equally in their insides. A man of sense carefully avoids any particular character in his dress; he is accurately clean for his own sake, but all the rest is for other people's. He dresses as well, and in the same manner, as the people of sense and fashion of the place where he is. If he dresses better, as he thinks, that is, more than they, he is a fop; if he dresses worse, he is unpardonably negligent: but, of the two, I would rather have a young fellow too much than too little dressed; the excess on that side will wear off, with a little age and reflection; but if he is negligent at twenty, he will be a sloven at forty, and stink at fifty years old. Dress yourself fine, where others are fine; and plain where others are plain; but take care always that your clothes are well made, and fit you, for otherwise they will give you a very awkward air. When you are once well dressed for the day, think no more of it afterwards; and, without any stiffness for fear of discomposing that dress, let all your motions be as easy and natural as if you had no clothes on at all. So much for dress, which I maintain to be a thing of consequence in the polite world.

As to manners, good-breeding, and the graces, I have so often entertained you upon those important subjects, that I can add nothing to what I have formerly said. Your own good sense will suggest to you the substance of them; and observation, experience, and good company, the several modes of them. Your great vivacity, which I hear of from many people, will be no hindrance to your pleasing in good company; on the contrary, it will be of use to you, if tempered by good-breeding, and accompanied by the graces. But then, I suppose your vivacity to be a vivacity of parts, and not a constitutional restlessness; for the most disagreeable composition that I know in the world, is that of strong animal spirits, with a cold genius. Such a fellow is troublesomely active, frivolously busy, foolishly lively; talks much with little meaning, and laughs more, with less reason: whereas, in my opinion, a warm and lively genius, with a cool constitution, is the perfection of human nature.

Do what you will, at Berlin, provided you do but do something all day long.

All that I desire of you is, that you will never slattern away one minute in idleness, and in doing of nothing. When you are not in company, learn what either books, masters, or Mr. Harte, can teach you; and when you are in company, learn (what company can only teach you) the characters and manners of mankind. I really ask your pardon for giving you this advice; because, if you are a rational creature and thinking being, as I suppose and verily believe you are, it must be unnecessary, and to a certain degree injurious. If I did not know by experience that some men pass their whole time in doing nothing, I should not think it possible for any being, superior to Monsieur Descarte's automatons, to squander away, in absolute idleness, one single minute of that small portion of time which is allotted us in this world.

I have lately seen one Mr. Cranmer, a very sensible merchant; who told me that he had dined with you, and seen you often at Leipsig. And, yesterday, I saw an old footman of mine, whom I made a messenger; who told me that he had seen you last August. You will easily imagine, that I was not the less glad to see them because they had seen you; and I examined them both narrowly, in their respective departments; the former as to your mind, the latter, as to your body. Mr. Cranmer gave me great satisfaction, not only by what he told me of himself concerning you, but by what he was commissioned to tell me from Mr. Mascow. As he speaks German perfectly himself, I asked him how you spoke it; and he assured me, very well for the time, and that a very little more practice would make you perfectly master of it. The messenger told me, that you were much grown, and, to the best of his guess, within two inches as tall as I am; that you were plump, and looked healthy and strong; which was all that I could expect, or hope, from the sagacity of the person.

I send you, my dear child (and you will not doubt), very sincerely, the wishes of the season. May you deserve a great number of happy New-years; and, if you deserve, may you have them! Many New-years, indeed, you may see, but happy ones you cannot see without deserving them. These, virtue, honor, and knowledge, alone can merit, alone can procure, *Dii tibi dent annos, de te nam cætera sumes,*[1] was a pretty piece of poetical flattery, where it was said: I hope that, in time, it may be no flattery when said to you. But I assure you, that whenever I cannot apply the latter part of the line to you with truth, I shall neither say, think, nor wish the former. Adieu!

Letter CLXII

London, Sept. 22, 1749.

Dear Boy: If I had faith in philters and love potions, I should suspect that you had given Sir Charles Williams some, by the manner in which he speaks of you, not only to me, but to everybody else. I will not repeat to you what he says of the extent and correctness of your knowledge, as it might either make you vain, or persuade you that you had already enough of what nobody can have too much. You will easily imagine how many questions I asked, and how narrowly I sifted him upon your subject; he answered me, and I daresay with truth, just as I could have wished; till, satisfied entirely with his accounts of your character and learning, I inquired into other matters, intrinsically indeed of less consequence, but still of great consequence to every man, and of more to you than to almost any man: I mean, your address, manners, and air. To these ques-

[1] May the gods give you years; all else you will get for yourself.

tions, the same truth which he had observed before obliged him to give me much less satisfactory answers. And as he thought himself, in friendship both to you and me, obliged to tell me the disagreeable as well as the agreeable truths, upon the same principle I think myself obliged to repeat them to you.

He told me then, that in company you were frequently most *provokingly* inattentive, absent, and *distrait:* [1] that you came into a room, and presented yourself very awkwardly: that at table you constantly threw down knives, forks, napkins, bread, etc., and that you neglected your person and dress, to a degree unpardonable at any age, and much more so at yours.

These things, howsoever immaterial they may seem to people who do not know the world, and the nature of mankind, give me, who know them to be exceedingly material, very great concern. I have long distrusted you, and therefore frequently admonished you, upon these articles; and I tell you plainly, that I shall not be easy till I hear a very different account of them. I know no one thing more offensive to a company, than that inattention and *distraction.* It is showing them the utmost contempt; and people never forgive contempt. No man is *distrait* with the man he fears, or the woman he loves; which is a proof that every man can get the better of that *distraction,* when he thinks it worth his while to do so; and, take my word for it, it is always worth his while. For my own part, I would rather be in company with a dead man, than with an absent one; for if the dead man gives me no pleasure, at least he shows me no contempt; whereas, the absent man, silently indeed, but very plainly, tells me that he does not think me worth his attention. Besides, can an absent man make any observations upon the characters, customs, and manners of the company? No. He may be in the best companies all his lifetime (if they will admit him, which, if I were they, I would not), and never be one jot the wiser. I never will converse with an absent man; one may as well talk to a deaf one. It is, in truth, a practical blunder, to address ourselves to a man who we see plainly neither hears, minds, nor understands us. Moreover, I aver that no man is, in any degree, fit for either business or conversation, who cannot and does not direct, and command his attention to the present object, be that what it will. You know, by experience, that I grudge no expense in your education, but I will positively not keep you a flapper.[2] You may read, in Dr. Swift, the description of these flappers, and the use they were of to your friends the Laputans; [3] whose minds (Gulliver says) are so taken up with intense speculations that they neither can speak or attend to the discourses of others, without being roused by some external taction upon the organs of speech and hearing; for which reason, those people who are able to afford it, always keep a flapper in their family, as one of their domestics; nor ever walk about, or make visits without him. This flapper is likewise employed diligently to attend his master in his walks; and upon occasion, to give a soft flap upon his eyes, because he is always so wrapped up in cogitation, that he is in manifest danger of falling down every precipice, and bouncing his head against every post, and, in the streets, of jostling others, or being jostled into the kennel himself. If Christian will undertake this province into the bargain, with all my heart; but I will not allow him any increase of wages

[1] distracted

[2] An attendant in Laputa whose function it was to flap the scientists with a blown bladder when their attention was required.

[3] The scientific quacks described in *Gulliver's Travels.*

upon that score. In short, I give you fair warning, that, when we meet, if you are absent in mind, I will soon be absent in body; for it will be impossible for me to stay in the room; and if at table you throw down your knife, plate, bread, etc., and hack the wing of a chicken for half an hour, without being able to cut it off, and your sleeve all the time in another dish, I must rise from table to escape the fever you would certainly give me. Good God! how I should be shocked, if you came into my room, for the first time, with two left legs, presenting yourself with all the graces and dignity of a tailor, and your clothes hanging upon you, like those in Monmouth street, upon tenter-hooks! whereas, I expect, nay, require, to see you present yourself with the easy and genteel air of a man of fashion, who has kept good company. I expect you not only well dressed but very well dressed; I expect a gracefulness in all your motions, and something particularly engaging in your address. All this I expect, and all this it is in your power, by care and attention, to make me find; but to tell you the plain truth, if I do not find it, we shall not converse very much together; for I cannot stand inattention and awkwardness; it would endanger my health. You have often seen, and I have as often made you observe L***'s distinguished inattention and awkwardness. Wrapped up, like a Laputan, in intense thought, and possibly sometimes in no thought at all (which, I believe, is very often the case of absent people), he does not know his most intimate acquaintance by sight, or answers them as if he were at cross purposes. He leaves his hat in one room, his sword in another, and would leave his shoes in a third, if his buckles, though awry, did not save them: his legs and arms, by his awkward management of them, seem to have undergone the *Question extraordinaire;* and his head, always hanging upon one or other of his shoulders, seems to have received the first stroke upon a block. I sincerely value and esteem him for his parts, learning, and virtue; but, for the soul of me, I cannot love him in company. This will be universally the case, in common life, of every inattentive, awkward man, let his real merit and knowledge be ever so great. When I was of your age, I desired to shine, as far as I was able, in every part of life; and was as attentive to my manners, my dress, and my air, in company on evenings, as to my books and my tutor in the mornings. A young fellow should be ambitious to shine in everything; and, of the two, always rather overdo than underdo. These things are by no means trifles: they are of infinite consequence to those who are to be thrown into the great world, and who would make a figure or a fortune in it. It is not sufficient to deserve well; one must please well too. Awkward, disagreeable merit will never carry anybody far. Wherever you find a good dancing-master, pray let him put you upon your haunches; not so much for the sake of dancing, as for coming into a room, and presenting yourself genteelly and gracefully. Women, whom you ought to endeavor to please, cannot forgive vulgar and awkward air and gestures; *il leur faut du brillant.*[1] The generality of men are pretty like them, and are equally taken by the same exterior graces.

I am very glad that you have received the diamond buckles safe; all I desire in return for them is, that they may be buckled even upon your feet, and that your stockings may not hide them. I should be sorry you were an egregious fop; but, I protest, that, of the two, I would rather have you a fop than a sloven. I think negligence in my own

[1] They need brilliance.

dress, even at my age, when certainly I expect no advantages from my dress, would be indecent with regard to others. I have done with fine clothes; but I will have my plain clothes fit me, and made like other people's. In the evenings, I recommend to you the company of women of fashion, who have a right to attention and will be paid it. Their company will smooth your manners, and give you a habit of attention and respect, of which you will find the advantage among men.

My plan for you, from the beginning, has been to make you shine equally in the learned, and in the polite world; the former part is almost completed to my wishes, and will, I am persuaded, in a little time more, be quite so. The latter part is still in your power to complete; and I flatter myself that you will do it, or else the former part will avail you very little; especially in your department, where the exterior address and graces do half the business; they must be the harbingers of your merit, or your merit will be very coldly received; all can, and do judge of the former, few of the latter.

Mr. Harte tells me that you have grown very much since your illness; if you get up to five feet ten, or even nine inches, your figure will probably be a good one; and if well dressed and genteel, will probably please; which is a much greater advantage to a man than people commonly think. Lord Bacon calls it a letter of recommendation.

I would wish you to be the *omnis homo, l'homme universel*.[1] You are nearer it, if you please, than ever anybody was at your age; and if you will but, for the course of this next year only, exert your whole attention to your studies in the morning, and to your address, manners, air, and *tournure* in the evenings, you will be the man I wish you, and the man that is rarely seen.

[1] complete man

Our letters go, at best, so irregularly, and so often miscarry totally, that, for greater security, I repeat the same things. So, though I acknowledged by last post Mr. Harte's letter of the 8th September N. S., I acknowledge it again by this to you. If this should find you still at Verona, let it inform you that I wish you would set out soon for Naples; unless Mr. Harte should think it better for you to stay at Verona, or any other place on this side Rome, till you go there for the Jubilee. Nay, if he likes it better, I am very willing that you should go directly from Verona to Rome; for you cannot have too much of Rome, whether upon account of the language, the curiosities, or the company. My only reason for mentioning Naples, is for the sake of the climate, upon account of your health; but if Mr. Harte thinks that your health is now so well restored as to be above climate, he may steer your course wherever he thinks proper; and, for aught I know, your going directly to Rome, and consequently staying there so much the longer, may be as well as anything else. I think you and I cannot put our affairs in better hands than in Mr. Harte's; and I will stake his infallibility against the Pope's, with some odds on his side. *Apropos* of the Pope; remember to be presented to him before you leave Rome, and go through the necessary ceremonies for it, whether of kissing his slipper or his b—h; for I would never deprive myself of anything that I wanted to do or see, by refusing to comply with an established custom. When I was in Catholic countries, I never declined kneeling in their churches at the elevation, nor elsewhere, when the Host went by. It is a complaisance due to the custom of the place, and by no means, as some silly people have imagined, an implied approbation of their doctrine. Bodily altitudes and situations are things so very indiffer-

ent in themselves, that I would quarrel with nobody about them. It may, indeed, be improper for Mr. Harte to pay that tribute of complaisance, upon account of his character.

This letter is a very long, and probably a very tedious one; but my anxiety for your perfection is so great, and particularly at this critical and decisive period of your life, that I am only afraid of omitting, but never of repeating, or dwelling too long upon anything that I think may be of the least use to you. Have the same anxiety for yourself, that I have for you, and all will do well. Adieu! my dear child.

Letter CLXVIII

London, Nov. 3, 1749.

Dear Boy: From the time you have had life, it has been the principal and favorite object of mine, to make you as perfect as the imperfections of human nature will allow; in this view, I have grudged no pains or expense in your education; convinced that education, more than nature, is the cause of that great difference which you see in the characters of men. While you were a child, I endeavored to form your heart habitually to virtue and honor, before your understanding was capable of showing you their beauty and utility. Those principles, which you then got, like your grammar rules, only by rote, are now, I am persuaded, fixed and confirmed by reason. And indeed they are so plain and clear, that they require but a very moderate degree of understanding, either to comprehend or practise them. Lord Shaftesbury says very prettily, that he would be virtuous for his own sake, though nobody were to know it; as he would be clean for his own sake, though nobody were to see him. I have therefore, since you have had the use of your reason, never written to you upon those subjects: they speak best for themselves; and I should now just as soon think of warning you gravely not to fall into the dirt or the fire, as into dishonor or vice. This view of mine, I consider as fully attained. My next object was sound and useful learning. My own care first, Mr. Harte's afterwards, and of late (I will own it to your praise) your own application, have more than answered my expectations in that particular; and, I have reason to believe, will answer even to my wishes. All that remains for me to wish, to recommend, to inculcate, to order, and to insist upon, is good-breeding; without which all your other qualifications will be lame, unadorned, and to a certain degree unavailing. And here I fear, and have too much reason to believe, that you are greatly deficient. The remainder of this letter, therefore, shall be (and it will not be the last by a great many) upon that subject.

A friend of yours and mine has very justly defined good-breeding to be, *the result of much good sense, some good nature, and a little self-denial for the sake of others, and with a view to obtain the same indulgence from them.* Taking this for granted (as I think it cannot be disputed), it is astonishing to me, that anybody who has good sense and good nature (and I believe you have both), can essentially fail in good-breeding. As to the modes of it, indeed, they vary according to persons, places, and circumstances; and are only to be acquired by observation and experience; but the substance of it is everywhere and eternally the same. Good manners are, to particular societies, what good morals are to society in general; their cement and their security. And, as laws are enacted to enforce good morals, or at least to prevent the ill effects of bad ones; so there are certain rules of civility, univer-

sally implied and received, to enforce good manners, and punish bad ones. And indeed there seems to me to be less difference, both between the crimes and punishments, than at first one would imagine. The immoral man, who invades another man's property, is justly hanged for it; and the ill-bred man, who, by his ill manners, invades and disturbs the quiet and comforts of private life, is by common consent as justly banished society. Mutual complaisances, attentions, and sacrifices of little conveniences, are as natural an implied compact between civilized people, as protection and obedience are between kings and subjects: whoever, in either case, violates that compact, justly forfeits all advantages arising from it. For my own part, I really think, that next to the consciousness of doing a good action, that of doing a civil one is the most pleasing; and the epithet which I should covet the most, next to that of Aristides, would be that of well-bred. Thus much for good-breeding in general: I will now consider some of the various modes and degrees of it.

Very few, scarcely any, are wanting in the respect which they should show to those whom they acknowledge to be infinitely their superiors; such as crowned heads, princes, and public persons of distinguished and eminent posts. It is the manner of showing that respect which is different. The man of fashion, and of the world, expresses it in its fullest extent; but naturally, easily, and without concern; whereas a man, who is not used to keep good company, expresses it awkwardly; one sees that he is not used to it, and that it costs him a great deal: but I never saw the worst-bred man living guilty of lolling, whistling, scratching his head, and such-like indecencies, in company that he respected. In such companies, therefore, the only point to be attended to is, to show that respect, which everybody means to show, in an easy, unembarrassed and graceful manner. This is what observation and experience must teach you.

In mixed companies, whoever is admitted to make part of them, is, for the time at least, supposed to be upon a footing of equality with the rest; and consequently, as there is no one principal object of awe and respect, people are apt to take a greater latitude in their behavior, and to be less upon their guard; and so they may, provided it be within certain bounds, which are upon no occasion to be transgressed. But, upon these occasions, though no one is entitled to distinguished marks of respect, every one claims, and very justly, every mark of civility and good-breeding. Ease is allowed, but carelessness and negligence are strictly forbidden. If a man accosts you, and talks to you ever so dully or frivolously, it is worse than rudeness, it is brutality, to show him, by a manifest inattention to what he says, that you think him a fool or a blockhead, and not worth hearing. It is much more so with regard to women; who, of whatever rank they are, are entitled, in consideration of their sex, not only to an attentive, but an officious good-breeding from men. Their little wants, likings, dislikes, preferences, antipathies, fancies, whims, and even impertinencies, must be officiously attended to, flattered, and, if possible, guessed at and anticipated by a well-bred man. You must never usurp to yourself those conveniences and *agrémens* [1] which are of common right; such as the best places, the best dishes, etc., but, on the contrary, always decline them yourself, and offer them to others; who, in their turns, will offer them to you; so that, upon the whole, you will in your turn enjoy your share of the common right. It would be endless for me to enumerate all

[1] prerogatives

the particular instances in which a well-bred man shows his good-breeding in good company; and it would be injurious to you to suppose, that your own good sense will not point them out to you; and then your own good nature will recommend, and your self-interest enforce the practice.

There is a third sort of good-breeding, in which people are the most apt to fail, from a very mistaken notion that they cannot fail at all. I mean with regard to one's most familiar friends and acquaintances, or those who really are our inferiors; and there, undoubtedly, a greater degree of ease is not only allowed, but proper, and contributes much to the comforts of a private, social life. But that ease and freedom have their bounds too, which must by no means be violated. A certain degree of negligence and carelessness becomes injurious and insulting, from the real or supposed inferiority of the persons: and that delightful liberty of conversation among a few friends is soon destroyed, as liberty often has been, by being carried to licentiousness. But example explains things best, and I will put a pretty strong case. Suppose you and me alone together; I believe you will allow that I have as good a right to unlimited freedom in your company, as either you or I can possibly have in any other; and I am apt to believe too, that you would indulge me in that freedom, as far as anybody would. But, notwithstanding this, do you imagine that I should think there were no bounds to that freedom? I assure you, I should not think so; and I take myself to be as much tied down by a certain degree of good manners to you, as by other degrees of them to other people. Were I to show you, by a manifest inattention to what you said to me, that I was thinking of something else the whole time; were I to yawn extremely or snore . . . . in your company, I should think that I behaved myself to you like a beast, and should not expect that you would care to frequent me. No. The most familiar and intimate habitudes, connections, and friendships, require a degree of good-breeding, both to preserve and cement them. If ever a man and his wife, or a man and his mistress, who pass nights as well as days together, absolutely lay aside all good-breeding, their intimacy will soon degenerate into a coarse familiarity, infallibly productive of contempt or disgust. The best of us have our bad sides, and it is as imprudent, as it is ill-bred, to exhibit them. I shall certainly not use ceremony with you; it would be misplaced between us: but I shall certainly observe that degree of good-breeding with you, which is, in the first place, decent, and which, I am sure, is absolutely necessary to make us like one another's company long.

I will say no more, now, upon this important subject of good-breeding, upon which I have already dwelt too long, it may be, for one letter; and upon which I shall frequently refresh your memory hereafter; but I will conclude with these axioms:

That the deepest learning, without good-breeding, is unwelcome and tiresome pedantry, and of use nowhere but in a man's own closet; and consequently of little or no use at all.

That a man, who is not perfectly well-bred, is unfit for good company, and unwelcome in it; will consequently dislike it soon, afterwards renounce it; and be reduced to solitude, or, what is worse, low and bad company.

That a man, who is not well-bred, is full as unfit for business as for company.

Make then, my dear child, I conjure you, good-breeding the great object of your thoughts and actions, at least half the day. Observe carefully the behavior and manners of those who are distin-

guished by their good-breeding; imitate, nay, endeavor to excel, that you may at least reach them; and be convinced that good-breeding is, to all wordly qualifications, what charity is to all Christian virtues. Observe how it adorns merit, and how often it covers the want of it. May you wear it to adorn, and not to cover you! Adieu.

Letter CXCIII

London, May 17, 1750.

My dear friend: Your apprenticeship is near out, and you are soon to set up for yourself; that approaching moment is a critical one for you, and an anxious one for me. A tradesman who would succeed in his way, must begin by establishing a character of integrity and good manners; without the former, nobody will go to his shop at all; without the latter, nobody will go there twice. This rule does not exclude the fair arts of trade. He may sell his goods at the best price he can, within certain bounds. He may avail himself of the humor, the whims, and the fantastical tastes of his customers; but what he warrants to be good must be really so, what he seriously asserts must be true, or his first fraudulent profits will soon end in a bankruptcy. It is the same in higher life, and in the great business of the world. A man who does not solidly establish, and really deserve, a character of truth, probity, good manners, and good morals, at his first setting out in the world, may impose, and shine like a meteor for a very short time, but will very soon vanish, and be extinguished with contempt. People easily pardon, in young men, the common irregularities of the senses; but they do not forgive the least vice of the heart. The heart never grows better by age; I fear rather worse; always harder. A young liar will be an old one; and a young knave, will only be a greater knave as he grows older. But should a bad young heart, accompanied with a good head (which by the way very seldom is the case), really reform in a more advanced age, from a consciousness of its folly, as well as of its guilt; such a conversion would only be thought prudential and political, but never sincere. I hope in God, and I verily believe, that you want no moral virtue. But the possession of all the moral virtues, *in actu primo*,[1] as the logicians call it, is not sufficient; you must have them *in actu secundo* too; nay, that is not sufficient either, you must have the reputation of them also. Your character in the world must be built upon that solid foundation, or it will soon fall, and upon your own head. You cannot, therefore, be too careful, too nice, too scrupulous, in establishing this character at first, upon which your whole depends. Let no conversation, no example, no fashion, no *bon mot*, no silly desire of seeming to be above, what most knaves and many fools, call prejudices, ever tempt you to avow, excuse, extenuate, or laugh at the least breach of morality; but show upon all occasions, and take all occasions to show, a detestation and abhorrence of it. There, though young, you ought to be strict; and there only, while young, it becomes you to be strict and severe. But there too, spare the persons, while you lash the crimes. All this relates, as you easily judge, to the vices of the heart, such as lying, fraud, envy, malice, detraction, etc., and I do not extend it to the little frailties of youth, flowing from high spirits and warm blood. It would ill become you, at your age, to declaim against them, and sententiously censure a gallantry, an accidental excess

[1] These are old terms in logic. The first means to possess something passively, as a body possesses heat without warming other things; the second is to possess it actively, as when that body imparts its heat to others. Here, one must not only be virtuous, but must exercise an influence for virtue upon those about one.

of the table, a frolic, an inadvertency; no, keep as free from them yourself as you can; but say nothing against them in others. They certainly mend by time, often by reason; and a man's worldly character is not affected by them, provided it be pure in all other respects.

To come now to a point of much less, but yet of very great consequence at your first setting out. Be extremely upon your guard against vanity, the common failing of inexperienced youth; but particularly against that kind of vanity that dubs a man a coxcomb; a character which, once acquired, is more indelible than that of the priesthood. It is not to be imagined by how many different ways vanity defeats its own purposes. One man decided peremptorily upon every subject, betrays his ignorance upon many, and shows a disgusting presumption upon the rest. Another desires to appear successful among the women; he hints at the encouragement he has received from those of the most distinguished rank and beauty, and intimates a particular connection with some one; if it is true, it is ungenerous; if false, it is infamous: but in either case he destroys the reputation he wants to get. Some flatter their vanity by little extraneous objects, which have not the least relation to themselves; such as being descended from, related to, or acquainted with people of distinguished merit, and eminent characters. They talk perpetually of their grandfather such-a-one, their uncle such-a-one, and their intimate friend Mr. Such-a-one, with whom, possibly, they are hardly acquainted. But admitting it all to be as they would have it, what then? Have they the more merit for those accidents? Certainly not. On the contrary, their taking up adventitious, proves their want of intrinsic merit; a rich man never borrows. Take this rule for granted, as a never-failing one—that you must never seem to affect the character in which you have a mind to shine. Modesty is the only sure bait when you angle for praise. The affectation of courage will make even a brave man pass only for a bully; as the affection of wit will make a man of parts pass for a coxcomb. By this modesty I do not mean timidity and awkward bashfulness. On the contrary, be inwardly firm and steady, know your own value, whatever it may be, and act upon that principle; but take a great care to let nobody discover that you do know your own value. Whatever real merit you have, other people will discover, and people always magnify their own discoveries, as they lessen those of others.

For God's sake revolve all these things seriously in your thoughts, before you launch out alone into the ocean of Paris. Recollect the observations that you have yourself made upon mankind, compare and connect them with my instructions, and then act systematically and consequentially from them; not *au jour la journée*.[1] Lay your little plan now, which you will hereafter extend and improve by your own observations, and by the advice of those who can never mean to mislead you; I mean Mr. Harte and myself.

[1] on the impulse of the moment

BIOGRAPHY: BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

Biography is a record of life as it has actually been lived in this world, and when artistically written, the revelation of human personality and of character. It deals with facts and is thus more definitely related to actuality than is fiction, but it can be written successfully only by one who has the imagination to interpret the facts sanely and to combine them in such a way as to get from them the truth that all art requires.

In his introductory words Boswell showed clearly that he understood the aim to be kept in mind in writing of his friend,—that mankind might "see him live" and ventured to add that Johnson would be "seen in this work more completely than any man who has ever yet lived." No biographer was ever more inspired by his subject than was Boswell. During years of close intimacy he had idolized Dr. Johnson and studied him intensely, recording the great man's conversations by a sort of shorthand, consulting everyone who he thought might give him additional information. He had among his gifts a sense of the picturesque scene and the dramatic moment, and in writing them up he gave all that he had to give with the zeal of a crusader. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is one of the great biographies of all literature.

Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84) was the chief literary figure of the latter half of the eighteenth century. He conducted periodicals and wrote among other works the *Lives of the Poets,* a dictionary, and *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.* Nothing that he wrote, however, was as important as his personality, for he lacked the talent to express artistically the greatness of his mind. "The memory of other authors," says Macaulay, "is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive." Boswell was not the only man of genius to be stirred by him. Sir Joshua Reynolds, Edmund Burke, David Garrick, Oliver Goldsmith, and Fanny Burney all owed much to him, and as he lives again in these pages it is easy to see why. His eccentricities were many, but these are as nothing compared with his manly courage, his shrewd wisdom, and his rugged force. Johnson and Boswell together have given us a book that is an illuminating picture of the London of their time and also an authentic guide in interpreting many of the experiences that life offers to all.

JAMES BOSWELL (1740–1795)

THE LIFE OF SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL.D.

To write the life of him who excelled all mankind in writing the lives of others, and who, whether we consider his extraordinary endowments, or his various works, has been equalled by few in any age, is an arduous, and may be reckoned in me a presumptuous task.

Had Dr. Johnson written his own life, in conformity with the opinion which he has given,[1] that every man's life may be best written by himself; had he employed in the preservation of his own history, that clearness of narration and elegance of language in which he has embalmed so many eminent persons, the world would probably have had the most perfect example of biography that was ever exhibited. But although he at different times, in a desultory manner, committed to writing many particulars of the progress of his mind and fortunes, he never had persevering diligence enough to form them into a regular composition. Of these memorials a few have been preserved; but the greater part was consigned by him to the flames, a few days before his death.

As I had the honor and happiness of enjoying his friendship for upwards of twenty years; as I had the scheme of writing his life constantly in view; as he was well apprised of this circumstance, and from time to time obligingly satisfied my inquiries, by communicating to me the incidents of his early years; as I acquired a facility in recollecting, and was very assiduous in recording, his conversation, of which the extraordinary vigor and vivacity constituted one of the first features of his character; and as I have spared no pains in obtaining materials concerning him, from every quarter where I could discover that they were to be found, and have been favored with the most liberal communications by his friends; I flatter myself that few biographers have entered upon such a work as this, with more advantages; independent of literary abilities, in which I am not vain enough to compare myself with some great names who have gone before me in this kind of writing.

Instead of melting down my materials into one mass, and constantly speaking in my own person, by which I might have appeared to have more merit in the execution of the work, I have resolved to adopt and enlarge upon the excellent plan of Mr. Mason, in his Memoirs of Gray. Wherever narrative is necessary to explain, connect, and supply, I furnish it to the best of my abilities; but in the chronological series of Johnson's life, which I trace as distinctly as I can, year by year, I produce, wherever it is in my power, his own minutes, letters, or conversation, being convinced that this mode is more lively, and will make my readers better acquainted with him, than even most of those were who actually knew him, but could know him only partially; whereas there is here an accumulation of intelligence from various points, by which his character is more fully understood and illustrated.

Indeed I cannot conceive a more perfect mode of writing any man's life, than not only relating all the most important events of it in their order, but interweaving what he privately wrote, and said, and thought; by which mankind are enabled as it were to see him alive, and to "live o'er each scene" with him, as he actually advanced through the several stages of his life. Had his other friends been as diligent and ardent as I was, he might have been almost entirely preserved. As it is, I will venture to say

[1] *Idler*, No. 84.

that he will be seen in this work more completely than any man who has ever yet lived.

And he will be seen as he really was; for I profess to write, not his panegyric, which must be all praise, but his Life; which, great and good as he was, must not be supposed to be entirely perfect. To be as he was, is indeed subject of panegyric enough to any man in this state of being; but in every picture there should be shade as well as light, and when I delineate him without reserve, I do what he himself recommended, both by his precept and his example.

"If the biographer writes from personal knowledge, and makes haste to gratify the public curiosity, there is danger lest his interest, his fear, his gratitude, or his tenderness overpower his fidelity, and tempt him to conceal, if not to invent. There are many who think it an act of piety to hide the faults or failings of their friends, even when they can no longer suffer by their detection; we therefore see whole ranks of characters adorned with uniform panegyric, and not to be known from one another but by extrinsic and casual circumstances. 'Let me remember, (says Hale,) when I find myself inclined to pity a criminal, that there is likewise a pity due to the country.' If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth." [1]

What I consider as the peculiar value of the following work, is, the quantity it contains of Johnson's conversation; which is universally acknowledged to have been eminently instructive and entertaining; and of which the specimens that I have given upon a former occasion, have been received with so much approbation, that I have good grounds for supposing that the world will not be indifferent to more ample communications of a similar nature.

That the conversation of a celebrated man, if his talents have been exerted in conversation, will best display his character, is, I trust, too well established in the judgment of mankind, to be at all shaken by a sneering observation of Mr. Mason, in his *Memoirs of Mr. William Whitehead,* in which there is literally no *Life,* but a mere dry narrative of facts. I do not think it was quite necessary to attempt a depreciation of what is universally esteemed, because it was not to be found in the immediate object of the ingenious writer's pen; for in truth, from a man so still and so tame, as to be contented to pass many years as the domestic companion of a superannuated lord and lady, conversation could no more be expected, than from a Chinese mandarin on a chimney-piece, or the fantastic figures on a gilt leather screen.

To this may be added the sentiments of the very man whose life I am about to exhibit. "The business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and display the minute details of daily life, where exterior appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and by virtue. The account of Thuanus is with great propriety said by its author to have been written, that it might lay open to posterity the private and familiar character of that man, *cujus ingenium et candorem ex ipsius scriptis sunt olim semper miraturi,* whose candor and genius will to the end of time be by his writings preserved in admiration.

"There are many invisible circumstances, which whether we read as enquirers after natural or moral knowledge, whether we intend to enlarge our science or increase our virtue, are more important

[1] *Rambler,* No. 60.

than public occurrences. Thus Sallust, the great master of nature, has not forgot in his account of Catiline to remark, that his walk was now quick, and again slow, as an indication of a mind revolving with violent commotion. Thus the story of Melanchthon affords a striking lecture on the value of time, by informing us, that when he had made an appointment, he expected not only the hour, but the minute to be fixed, that the day might not run out in the idleness of suspense; and all the plans and enterprises of De Witt are now of less importance to the world than that part of his personal character, which represents him as careful of his health, and negligent of his life.

"But biography has often been allotted to writers, who seem very little acquainted with the nature of their task, or very negligent about the performance. They rarely afford any other account than might be collected from public papers, but imagine themselves writing a life, when they exhibit a chronological series of actions or perferments; and have so little regard to the manners or behavior of their heroes, that more knowledge may be gained of a man's real character, by a short conversation with one of his servants, than from a formal and studied narrative, begun with his pedigree, and ended with his funeral.

"There are indeed, some natural reasons why these narratives are often written by such as were not likely to give much instruction or delight, and why most accounts of particular persons are barren and useless. If a life be delayed till interest and envy are at an end, we may hope for impartiality, but must expect little intelligence; for the incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind, such as soon escape the memory, and are rarely transmitted by tradition. We know how few can portray a living acquaintance, except by his most prominent and observable particularities, and the grosser features of his mind; and it may be easily imagined how much of this little knowledge may be lost in imparting it, and how soon a succession of copies will lose all resemblance of the original." [1]

I am fully aware of the objections which may be made to the minuteness on some occasions of my detail of Johnson's conversation, and how happily it is adapted for the petty exercise of ridicule, by men of superficial understanding and ludicrous fancy; but I remain firm and confident in my opinion, that minute particulars are frequently characteristic, and always amusing, when they relate to a distinguished man. I am therefore exceedingly unwilling that any thing, however slight, which my illustrious friend thought it worth his while to express, with any degree of point, should perish.

Of one thing I am certain, that considering how highly the small portion which we have of the table-talk and other anecdotes of our celebrated writers is valued, and how earnestly it is regretted that we have not more, I am justified in preserving rather too many of Johnson's sayings, than too few; especially as from the diversity of dispositions it cannot be known with certainty beforehand, whether what may seem trifling to some, and perhaps to the collector himself, may not be most agreeable to many; and the greater number that an author can please in any degree, the more pleasure does there arise to a benevolent mind.

Having said thus much by way of introduction, I commit the following pages to the candor of the Public.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, on the 18th of September, N.S. 1709; and his initiation into the Christian church was not de-

[1] *Rambler*. No. 60.

layed; for his baptism is recorded, in the register of St. Mary's parish in that city, to have been performed on the day of his birth. His father is there styled *Gentleman,* a circumstance of which an ignorant panegyrist has praised him for not being proud; when the truth is, that the appellation of Gentleman, though now lost in the indiscriminate assumption of *Esquire,* was commonly taken by those who could not boast of gentility. His father was Michael Johnson, a native of Derbyshire, of obscure extraction, who settled in Lichfield as a bookseller and stationer. His mother was Sarah Ford, descended of an ancient race of substantial yeomanry in Warwickshire. They were well advanced in years when they married, and never had more than two children, both sons; Samuel, their first-born, who lived to be the illustrious character whose various excellence I am to endeavor to record, and Nathanael, who died in his twenty-fifth year.

Mr. Michael Johnson was a man of a large and robust body, and of a strong and active mind; yet, as in the most solid rocks veins of unsound substance are often discovered, there was in him a mixture of that disease, the nature of which eludes the most minute enquiry, though the effects are well known to be a weariness of life, an unconcern about those things which agitate the greater part of mankind, and a general sensation of gloomy wretchedness. From him then his son inherited, with some other qualities, "a vile melancholy," which in his too strong expression of any disturbance of mind, "made him mad all his life, at least not sober." Michael was, however, forced by the narrowness of his circumstances to be very diligent in business, not only in his shop, but by occasionally resorting to several towns in the neighborhood, some of which were at a considerable distance from Lichfield. At that time booksellers' shops in the provincial towns of England were very rare, so that there was not one even in Birmingham, in which town old Mr. Johnson used to open a shop every market-day. He was a pretty good Latin scholar, and a citizen so creditable as to be made one of the magistrates of Lichfield; and, being a man of good sense, and skill in his trade, he acquired a reasonable share of wealth, of which however he afterwards lost the greatest part, by engaging unsuccessfully in a manufacture of parchment. He was a zealous high-church man and royalist, and retained his attachment to the unfortunate house of Stuart, though he reconciled himself, by casuistical arguments of expediency and necessity, to take the oaths imposed by the prevailing power.

Johnson's mother was a woman of distinguished understanding. I asked his old school-fellow, Mr. Hector, surgeon, of Birmingham, if she was not vain of her son. He said, "she had too much good sense to be vain, but she knew her son's value." Her piety was not inferior to her understanding; and to her must be ascribed those early impressions of religion upon the mind of her son, from which the world afterwards derived so much benefit.

Young Johnson had the misfortune to be much afflicted with the scrofula, or king's-evil, which disfigured a countenance naturally well formed, and hurt his visual nerves so much, that he did not see at all with one of his eyes, though its appearance was little different from that of the other. There is amongst his prayers, one inscribed *"When my* EYE *was restored to its use,"* which ascertains a defect that many of his friends knew he had, though I never perceived it. I supposed him to be only near-sighted; and indeed I must observe, that in no other respect could I discern any defect

in his vision; on the contrary, the force of his attention and perceptive quickness made him see and distinguish all manner of objects, whether of nature or of art, with a nicety that is rarely to be found. When he and I were traveling in the Highlands of Scotland, and I pointed out to him a mountain which I observed resembled a cone, he corrected my inaccuracy, by showing me, that it was indeed pointed at the top, but that one side of it was larger than the other And the ladies with whom he was acquainted agree, that no man was more nicely and minutely critical in the elegance of female dress. When I found that he saw the romantic beauties of Islam, in Derbyshire, much better than I did, I told him that he resembled an able performer upon a bad instrument. How false and contemptible then are all the remarks which have been made to the prejudice either of his candor or of his philosophy, founded upon a supposition that he was almost blind. It has been said, that he contracted this grievous malady from his nurse. His mother, yielding to the superstitious notion, which, it is wonderful to think, prevailed so long in this country, as to the virtue of the regal touch; a notion, which our kings encouraged, and to which a man of such enquiry and such judgment as Carte could give credit; carried him to London, where he was actually touched by Queen Anne. Mrs. Johnson indeed, as Mr. Hector informed me, acted by the advice of the celebrated Sir John Floyer, then a physician in Lichfield. Johnson used to talk of this very frankly; and Mrs. Piozzi has preserved his very picturesque description of the scene, as it remained upon his fancy. Being asked if he could remember Queen Anne,—"He had (he said) a confused, but somehow a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds, and a long black hood." This touch, however, was without any effect. I ventured to say to him, in allusion to the political principles in which he was educated, and of which he ever retained some odor, that "his mother had not carried him far enough; she should have taken him to Rome."

He was first taught to read English by Dame Oliver, a widow, who kept a school for young children in Lichfield. He told me she could read the black letter, and asked him to borrow for her, from his father, a bible in that character. When he was going to Oxford, she came to take leave of him, brought him, in the simplicity of her kindness, a present of gingerbread, and said he was the best scholar she ever had. He delighted in mentioning this early compliment: adding, with smile, that "this was as high a proof of his merit as he could conceive." His next instructor in English was a master, whom, when he spoke of him to me, he familiarly called Tom Brown, who, said he, "published a spelling-book, and dedicated it to the Universe; but, I fear, no copy of it can now be had."

He began to learn Latin with Mr. Hawkins, usher, or undermaster of Lichfield school, "a man (said he) very skilful in his little way." With him he continued two years, and then rose to be under the care of Mr. Hunter, the headmaster, who, according to his account, "was very severe, and wrong-headedly severe. He used (said he) to beat us unmercifully; and he did not distinguish between ignorance and negligence; for he would beat a boy equally for not knowing a thing, as for neglecting to know it. He would ask a boy a question; and if he did not answer it, he would beat him, without considering whether he had an opportunity of knowing how to answer it. For instance, he would call up a boy and ask him Latin for a candlestick, which the boy could not expect to be asked. Now,

Sir, if a boy could answer every question, there would be no need of a master to teach him."

Indeed Johnson was very sensible how much he owed to Mr. Hunter. Mr. Langton one day asked him how he had acquired so accurate a knowledge of Latin, in which, I believe, he was exceeded by no man of his time; he said, "My master whipt me very well. Without that, Sir, I should have done nothing." He told Mr. Langton, that while Hunter was flogging his boys unmercifully, he used to say, "And this I do to save you from the gallows." Johnson, upon all occasions, expressed his approbation of enforcing instruction by means of the rod. "I would rather (said he) have the rod to be the general terror to all, to make them learn, than tell a child, if you do thus, or thus, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters. The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped, and gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas, by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundation of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other."

That superiority over his fellows, which he maintained with so much dignity in his march through life, was not assumed from vanity and ostentation, but was the natural and constant effect of those extraordinary powers of mind, of which he could not but be conscious by comparison; the intellectual difference, which in other cases of comparison of characters, is often a matter of undecided contest, being as clear in his case as the superiority of stature in some men above others. Johnson did not strut or stand on tip-toe: he only did not stoop. From his earliest years, his superiority was perceived and acknowledged. He was from the beginning, Ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν, a king of men. His schoolfellow, Mr. Hector, has obligingly furnished me with many particulars of his boyish days: and assured me that he never knew him corrected at school, but for talking and diverting other boys from their business. He seemed to learn by intuition; for though indolence and procrastination were inherent in his constitution, whenever he made an exertion he did more than any one else. In short, he is a memorable instance of what has been often observed, that the boy is the man in miniature: and that the distinguishing characteristics of each individual are the same, through the whole course of life. His favorites used to receive very liberal assistance from him; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, such the desire to obtain his regard, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while he sat upon his back, and one on each side supported him; and thus he was borne triumphant. Such a proof of the early predominance of intellectual vigor is very remarkable, and does honor to human nature. Talking to me once himself of his being much distinguished at school, he told me, "they never thought to raise me by comparing me to any one; they never said, Johnson is as good a scholar as such a one; but such a one is as good a scholar as Johnson; and this was said but of one, but of Lowe; and I do not think he was as good a scholar."

He discovered a great ambition to excel, which roused him to counteract his indolence. He was uncommonly inquisitive; and his memory was so tenacious, that he never forgot anything that he either heard or read. Mr. Hector remembers having recited to him eighteen verses, which, after a little pause, he repeated

verbatim, varying only one epithet, by which he improved the line.

He never joined with the other boys in their ordinary diversions: his only amusement was in winter, when he took a pleasure in being drawn upon the ice by a boy barefooted, who pulled him along by a garter fixed round him; no very easy operation, as his size was remarkably large. His defective sight, indeed, prevented him from enjoying the common sports; and he once pleasantly remarked to me, "how wonderfully well he had contrived to be idle without them." Lord Chesterfield, however, has justly observed in one of his letters, when earnestly cautioning a friend against the pernicious effects of idleness, that active sports are not to be reckoned idleness in young people; and that the listless torpor of doing nothing alone deserves that name. Of this dismal inertness of disposition, Johnson had all his life too great a share. Mr. Hector relates, that "he could not oblige him more than by sauntering away the hours of vacation in the fields, during which he was more engaged in talking to himself than to his companion."

Dr. Percy, the Bishop of Dromore, who was long intimately acquainted with him, and has preserved a few anecdotes concerning him, regretting that he was not a more diligent collector, informs me, that "when a boy he was immoderately fond of reading romances of chivalry, and he retained his fondness for them through life; so that (adds his Lordship) spending part of a summer at my parsonage-house in the country, he chose for his regular reading the old Spanish romance of Felixmarte of Hircania, in folio, which he read quite through. Yet I have heard him attribute to these extravagant fictions that unsettled turn of mind which prevented his ever fixing in any profession."

1725.—After having resided for some time at the house of his uncle,[1] Cornelius Ford, Johnson was, at the age of fifteen, removed to the school of Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, of which Mr. Wentworth was then master. This step was taken by the advice of his cousin, the Rev. Mr. Ford, a man in whom both talents and good dispositions were disgraced by licentiousness, but who was a very able judge of what was right. At this school he did not receive so much benefit as was expected. It has been said, that he acted in the capacity of an assistant to Mr. Wentworth, in teaching the younger boys. "Mr. Wentworth (he told me) was a very able man, but an idle man, and to me very severe; but I cannot blame him much. I was then a big boy; he saw I did not reverence him; and that he should get no honor by me. I had brought enough with me, to carry me through; and all I should get at his school would be ascribed to my own labor, or to my former master. Yet he taught me a great deal."

The two years which he spent at home, after his return from Stourbridge, he passed in what he thought idleness, and was scolded by his father for his want of steady application. He had no settled plan of life, nor looked forward at all, but merely lived from day to day. Yet he read a great deal in a desultory manner, without any scheme of study, as chance threw books in his way, and inclination directed him through them. He used to mention one curious instance of his casual reading, when but a boy. Having imagined that his brother had hid some apples behind a large folio upon an upper shelf in his father's shop, he climbed up to search for them. There were no apples; but the large folio proved to be Petrarch, whom he had seen mentioned in some preface, as one of the restorers

[1] A physician, brother of Johnson's mother.

of learning. His curiosity having been thus excited, he sat down with avidity, and read a great part of the book. What he read during these two years, he told me, was not works of mere amusement, "not voyages and travels, but all literature, Sir, all ancient writers, all manly: though but little Greek, only some of Anacreon and Hesiod: but in this irregular manner (added he) I had looked into a great many books, which were not commonly known at the Universities, where they seldom read any books but what are put into their hands by their tutors: so that when I came to Oxford, Dr. Adams. now master of Pembroke College, told me, I was the best qualified for the University that he had ever known come there."

That a man in Mr. Michael Johnson's circumstances should think of sending his son to the expensive University of Oxford, at his own charge, seems very improbable. The subject was too delicate to question Johnson upon. But I have been assured by Dr. Taylor that the scheme never would have taken place, had not a gentleman of Shropshire, one of his schoolfellows, spontaneously undertaken to support him at Oxford, in the character of his companion; though, in fact, he never received any assistance whatever from that gentleman.

He, however, went to Oxford, and was entered a Commoner of Pembroke College on the 31st of October, 1728, being then in his nineteenth year.

The Reverend Dr. Adams, who afterwards presided over Pembroke College with universal esteem, told me he was present, and gave me some account of what passed on the night of Johnson's arrival at Oxford. On that evening, his father, who had anxiously accompanied him, found means to have him introduced to Mr. Jorden, who was to be his tutor. His being put under any tutor reminds us of what Wood says of Robert Burton, author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy," when elected student of Christ Church; "for form's sake, *though he wanted not a tutor,* he was put under the tuition of Dr. John Bancroft, afterwards Bishop of Oxon."

His father seemed very full of the merits of his son, and told the company he was a good scholar, and a poet, and wrote Latin verses. His figure and manner appeared strange to them; but he behaved modestly, and sat silent, till upon something which occurred in the course of conversation, he suddenly struck in and quoted Macrobius; and thus he gave the first impression of that more extensive reading in which he had indulged himself.

The "morbid melancholy," which was lurking in his constitution, and to which we may ascribe those particularities, and that aversion to regular life, which, at a very early period, marked his character, gathered such strength in his twentieth year, as to afflict him in a dreadful manner. While he was at Lichfield, in the college vacation of the year 1729, he felt himself overwhelmed with an horrible hypochondria, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness, and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which made existence misery. From this dismal malady he never afterwards was perfectly relieved; and all his labors, and all his enjoyments, were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence. How wonderful, how unsearchable are the ways of God! Johnson, who was blest with all the powers of genius and understanding in a degree far above the ordinary state of human nature, was at the same time visited with a disorder so afflictive, that they who know it by dire experience, will not envy his exalted endowments. That it was, in some degree, occasioned by a defect in his nervous

system, that inexplicable part of our frame, appears highly probable. He told Mr. Paradise that he was sometimes so languid and inefficient, that he could not distinguish the hour upon the town-clock.

It is a common effect of low spirits or melancholy, to make those who are afflicted with it imagine that they are actually suffering those evils which happen to be most strongly presented to their minds. Some have fancied themselves to be deprived of the use of their limbs, some to labor under acute diseases, others to be in extreme poverty; when, in truth, there was not the least reality in any of the suppositions; so that when the vapors were dispelled, they were convinced of the delusion. To Johnson, whose supreme enjoyment was the exercise of his reason, the disturbance or obscuration of that faculty was the evil most to be dreaded. Insanity, therefore, was the object of his most dismal apprehension; and he fancied himself seized by it, or approaching to it, at the very time when he was giving proofs of a more than ordinary soundness and vigor of judgment. That his own diseased imagination should have so far deceived him, is strange; but it is stranger still that some of his friends should have given credit to his groundless opinion, when they had such undoubted proofs that it was totally fallacious; though it is by no means surprising that those who wish to depreciate him, should, since his death, have laid hold of this circumstance, and insisted upon it with very unfair aggravation.

The history of his mind as to religion is an important article. I have mentioned the early impressions made upon his tender imagination by his mother, who continued her pious care with assiduity, but, in his opinion, not with judgment. "Sunday (said he) was a heavy day to me when I was a boy. My mother confined me on that day, and made me read "The Whole Duty of Man," from a great part of which I could derive no instruction. When, for instance, I had read the chapter on theft, which from my infancy I had been taught was wrong, I was no more convinced that theft was wrong than before; so there was no accession of knowledge. A boy should be introduced to such books by having his attention directed to the arrangement, to the style, and other excellencies of composition; that the mind being thus engaged by an amusing variety of objects may not grow weary."

He communicated to me the following particulars upon the subject of his religious progress. "I fell into an inattention to religion, or an indifference about it, in my ninth year. The church at Lichfield, in which we had a seat, wanted reparation, so I was to go and find a seat in other churches; and having bad eyes, and being awkward about this, I used to go and read in the fields on Sunday. This habit continued till my fourteenth year; and still I find a great reluctance to go to church. I then became a sort of lax *talker* against religion, for I did not much *think* against it; and this lasted till I went to Oxford, where it would not be *suffered*. When at Oxford, I took up Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, expecting to find it a dull book, (as such books generally are), and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me; and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest of religion, after I became capable of rational inquiry." From this time forward religion was the predominant object of his thoughts; though, with the just sentiments of a conscientious Christian, he lamented that his practice of its duties fell far short of what it ought to be.

The particular course of his reading while at Oxford, and during the time of vacation which he passed at home, cannot

be traced. Enough has been said of his irregular mode of study. He told me, that from his earliest years he loved to read poetry, but hardly ever read any poem to an end; that he read Shakespeare at a period so early, that the speech of the ghost in Hamlet terrified him when he was alone; that Horace's Odes were the compositions in which he took most delight, and it was long before he liked his Epistles and Satires. He told me what he read *solidly* at Oxford was Greek; not the Grecian historians, but Homer and Euripides, and now and then a little Epigram; that the study of which he was the most fond was Metaphysics, but he had not read much, even in that way. I always thought that he did himself injustice in his account of what he had read, and that he must have been speaking with reference to the vast portion of study which is possible, and to which a few scholars in the whole history of literature have attained; for when I once asked him whether a person whose name I have now forgotten, studied hard, he answered "No, Sir. I do not believe he studied hard. I never knew a man who studied hard. I conclude, indeed, from the effects, that some men have studied hard, as Bentley and Clarke." Trying him by that criterion upon which he formed his judgement of others, we may be absolutely certain, both from his writings and his conversation, that his reading was very extensive. Dr. Adam Smith, than whom few were better judges on this subject, once observed to me, that "Johnson knew more books than any man alive." He had a peculiar facility in seizing at once what was valuable in any book, without submitting to the labor of perusing it from beginning to end. He had, from the irritability of his constitution, at all times, an impatience and hurry when he either read or wrote. A certain apprehension, arising from novelty, made him write his first exercise at College twice over; but he never took that trouble with any other composition; and we shall see that his most excellent works were struck off at a heat with rapid exertion.

Yet he appears, from his early notes or memorandums in my possession, to have at various times attempted, or at least planned, a methodical course of study, according to computation, of which he was all his life fond, as it fixed his attention steadily upon something without, and prevented his mind from preying upon itself. Thus I find in his handwriting the number of lines in each of two of Euripides's Tragedies, of the Georgics of Virgil, of the first six books of the Æneid, of Horace's Art of Poetry, of three of the books of Ovid's Metamorphosis, of some parts of Theocritus, and of the tenth Satire of Juvenal; and a table, showing at the rate of various numbers a day, (I suppose verses to be read,) what would be, in each case, the total amount in a week, month, and year.

No man had a more ardent love of literature, or a higher respect for it, than Johnson. His apartment in Pembroke College was that upon the second floor, over the gateway. The enthusiast of learning will ever contemplate it with veneration. One day, while he was sitting in it quite alone, Dr. Panting, then master of the College, whom he called "a fine Jacobite fellow," overhead him uttering this soliloquy in his strong, emphatic voice: "Well, I have a mind to see what is done in other places of learning. I'll go and visit the universities abroad. I'll go to France and Italy. I'll go to Padua. —And I'll mind my business. For an *Athenian* blockhead is the worst of all blockheads."

Dr. Adams told me that Johnson, while he was at Pembroke College, "was caressed and loved by all about him, was

a gay and frolicsome fellow, and passed there the happiest part of his life." But this is a striking proof of the fallacy of appearances, and how little any of us know of the real internal state even of those whom we see most frequently; for the truth is, that he was then depressed by poverty, and irritated by disease. When I mentioned to him this account as given me by Dr. Adams, he said, "Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority."

He was not, however, blind to what he thought the defects of his own College: and I have, from the information of Dr. Taylor, a very strong instance of that rigid honesty which he ever inflexibly preserved. Taylor had obtained his father's consent to be entered of Pembroke, that he might be with his schoolfellow Johnson, with whom, though some years older than himself, he was very intimate. This would have been a great comfort to Johnson. But he fairly told Taylor that he could not, in conscience, suffer him to enter where he knew he could not have an able tutor. He then made enquiry all round the University, and having found that Mr. Bateman, of Christ-Church, was the tutor of highest reputation, Taylor was entered of that College. Mr. Bateman's lectures were so excellent, that Johnson used to come and get them at second-hand from Taylor, till his poverty being so extreme, that his shoes were worn out, and his feet appeared through them, he saw that this humiliating circumstance was perceived by the Christ-Church men, and he came no more. He was too proud to accept of money, and somebody having set a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation. How must we feel when we read such an anecdote of Samuel Johnson!

The *res angusta domi* prevented him from having the advantage of a complete academical education. The friend to whom he had trusted for support had deceived him. His debts in College, though not great, were increasing; and his scanty remittances from Lichfield, which had all along been made with great difficulty, could be supplied no longer, his father having fallen into a state of insolvency. Compelled, therefore, by irresistible necessity, he left the College in autumn, 1731, without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three years.

In the forlorn state of his circumstances, he accepted of an offer to be employed as usher in the school of Market-Bosworth, in Leicestershire, to which it appears, from one of his little fragments of a diary, that he went on foot, on the 16th of July.—"*Julii* 16. *Bosvortiam pedes petii.*" But it is not true, as has been erroneously related, that he was assistant to the famous Anthony Blackwall, whose merit has been honored by the testimony of Bishop Hurd, who was his scholar; for Mr. Blackwell died on the 8th of April, 1730, more than a year before Johnson left the University.

This employment was very irksome to him in every respect, and he complained grievously of it in his letters to his friend, Mr. Hector, who was now settled as a surgeon at Birmingham. The letters are lost; but Mr. Hector recollects his writing "that the poet had described the dull sameness of his existence in these words, '*Vitam continet una dies*' (one day contains the whole of my life); that it was unvaried as the note of the cuckoo; and that he did not know whether it was more disagreeable for him to teach, or the boys to learn, the grammar rules." His general aversion to this painful drudgery was greatly enhanced by a dis-

agreement between him and Sir Wolstan Dixey, the patron of the school, in whose house, I have been told, he officiated as a kind of domestic chaplain, so far, at least, as to say grace at table, but was treated with what he represented as intolerable harshness; and, after suffering for a few months such complicated misery, he relinquished a situation which all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even a degree of horror. But it is probable that at this period, whatever uneasiness he may have endured, he laid the foundation of much future eminence by application to his studies.

Being now again totally unoccupied, he was invited by Mr. Hector to pass some time with him at Birmingham, as his guest, at the house of Mr. Warren, with whom Mr. Hector lodged and boarded. Mr. Warren was the first established bookseller in Birmingham, and was very attentive to Johnson, who he soon found could be of much service to him in his trade, by his knowledge of literature; and he even obtained the assistance of his pen in furnishing some numbers of a periodical essay printed in the newspaper, of which Warren was proprietor. After very diligent inquiry, I have not been able to recover those early specimens of that particular mode of writing by which Johnson afterwards so greatly distinguished himself.

He continued to live as Mr. Hector's guest for about six months, and then hired lodgings in another part of the town, finding himself as well situated at Birmingham as he supposed he could be any where, while he had no settled plan of life, and very scanty means of subsistence. He made some valuable acquaintances there, amongst whom were Mr. Porter, a mercer, whose widow he afterwards married, and Mr. Taylor, who by his ingenuity in mechanical inventions, and his success in trade, acquired an immense fortune. But the comfort of being near Mr. Hector, his old school-fellow and intimate friend, was Johnson's chief inducement to continue here.

[1734] We find him again this year at Birmingham, and there is preserved the following letter from him to Mr. Edward Cave, the original compiler and editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine:*

To Mr. Cave.

"Sir, Nov. 25, 1734.

"As you appear no less sensible than your readers of the defects of your poetical article, you will not be displeased, if, in order to the improvement of it, I communicate to you the sentiments of a person, who will undertake, on reasonable terms, sometimes to fill a column.

"His opinion is, that the public would not give you a bad reception, if, beside the current wit of the month, which a critical examination would generally reduce to a narrow compass, you admitted not only poems, inscriptions, &c. never printed before, which he will sometimes supply you with; but likewise short literary dissertations in Latin or English, critical remarks on authors ancient or modern, forgotten poems that deserve revival, or loose pieces, like Floyer's,[1] worth preserving. By this method, your literary article, for so it might be called, will, he thinks, be better recommended to the public than by low jests, awkward buffoonery, or the dull scurrilities of either party.

"If such a correspondence will be agreeable to you, be pleased to inform me in two posts, what the conditions are on which you shall expect it. Your late offer[2] gives me no reason to distrust your generosity. If you engage in any

[1] An article on *Cold Baths* in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1734.

[2] A prize of £50 offered for a poem.

literary projects besides this paper, I have other designs to impart, if I could be secure from having others reap the advantage of what I should hint.

"Your letter by being directed to *S. Smith,* to be left at the Castle in Birmingham, Warwickshire, will reach

"Your humble servant."

Mr. Cave has put a note on this letter, "Answered Dec. 2." But whether any thing was done in consequence of it we are not informed.

In a man whom religious education has secured from licentious indulgences, the passion of love, when once it has seized him, is exceedingly strong; being unimpaired by dissipation, and totally concentrated in one object. This was experienced by Johnson, when he became the fervent admirer of Mrs. Porter, after her first husband's death. Miss Porter told me, that when he was first introduced to her mother, his appearance was very forbidding: he was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrofula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair, which was straight and stiff, and separated behind: and he often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise and ridicule. Mrs. Porter was so much engaged by his conversation that she overlooked all these external disadvantages, and said to her daughter, "this is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life."

Though Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson, and her person and manner, as described to me by the late Mr. Garrick, were by no means pleasing to others, she must have had a superiority of understanding and talents, as she certainly inspired him with a more than ordinary passion; and she having signified her willingness to accept of his hand, he went to Lichfield to ask his mother's consent to the marriage, which he could not but be conscious was a very imprudent scheme, both on account of their disparity of years, and her want of fortune. But Mrs. Johnson knew too well the ardor of her son's temper, and was too tender a parent to oppose his inclinations.

I know not for what reason the marriage ceremony was not performed at Birmingham; but a resolution was taken that it should be at Derby, for which place the bride and bridegroom set out on horseback, I suppose in very good humor. But though Mr. Topham Beauclerk used archly to mention Johnson's having told him with much gravity, "Sir, it was a love marriage on both sides," I have had from my illustrious friend the following curious account of their journey to church upon the nuptial morn: "Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, Sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me; and, when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice; and I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly, till I was fairly out of her sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I was sure she could not miss it; and I contrived that she should soon come up with me. When she did, I observed her to be in tears."

This, it must be allowed, was a singular beginning of connubial felicity; but there is no doubt that Johnson, though he thus showed a manly firmness, proved a most affectionate and indulgent husband to the last moment of Mrs. Johnson's life: and in his "Prayers and Meditations," we find very remarkable evidence that his regard and fondness for her never ceased, even after her death.

He now set up a private academy, for which purpose he hired a large house, well situated near his native city. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1736, there is the following advertisement: "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek Languages, by SAMUEL JOHNSON." But the only pupils that were put under his care were the celebrated David Garrick and his brother George, and a Mr. Offely, a young gentleman of good fortune who died early. As yet, his name had nothing of that celebrity which afterwards commanded the highest attention and respect of mankind. Had such an advertisement appeared after the publication of his *London,* or his *Rambler,* or his *Dictionary,* how would it have burst upon the world! with what eagerness would the great and the wealthy have embraced an opportunity of putting their sons under the learned tuition of SAMUEL JOHNSON. The truth, however, is, that he was not so well qualified for being a teacher of elements, and a conductor in learning by regular gradations, as men of inferior powers of mind. His own acquisitions had been made by fits and starts, by violent irruptions into the regions of knowledge; and it could not be expected that his impatience would be subdued, and his impetuosity restrained, so as to fit him for a quiet guide to novices. The art of communicating instruction, of whatever kind, is much to be valued; and I have ever thought that those who devote themselves to this employment, and do their duty with diligence and success, are entitled to very high respect from the community, as Johnson himself often maintained. Yet I am of opinion that the greatest abilities are not only not required for this office, but render a man less fit for it.

Johnson was not more satisfied with his situation as the master of an academy, than with that of the usher of a school; we need not wonder, therefore, that he did not keep his academy above a year and a half. From Mr. Garrick's account he did not appear to have been profoundly reverenced by his pupils. His oddities of manner, and uncouth gesticulations, could not but be the subject of merriment to them; and in particular, the young rogues used to listen at the door of his bed-chamber, and peep through the key-hole, that they might turn into ridicule his tumultuous and awkward fondness for Mrs. Johnson, whom he used to name by the familiar appellation of *Tetty* or *Tetsy,* which, like *Betty* or *Betsy,* is provincially used as a contraction for *Elizabeth,* her christian name, but which to us seems ludicrous when applied to a woman of her age and appearance. Mr. Garrick described her to me as very fat, with a bosom of more than ordinary protuberance, with swelled cheeks, of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increased by the liberal use of cordials; flaring and fantastic in her dress, and affected both in her speech and her general behavior. I have seen Garrick exhibit her, by his exquisite talent of mimicry, so as to excite the heartiest bursts of laughter; but he, probably, as is the case in all such representations, considerably aggravated the picture.

While Johnson kept his academy, there can be no doubt that he was insensibly furnishing his mind with various knowledge; but I have not discovered that he wrote any thing except a great part of his tragedy of *Irene.* Mr. Peter Garrick, the elder brother of David, told me that he remembered Johnson's borrowing the *Turkish History* of him, in order to form his play from it. When he had finished some part of it, he read what he had done to Mr. Walmsley, who objected to his having already brought his heroine into great distress, and asked him, "how

can you possibly contrive to plunge her into deeper calamity?" Johnson, in sly allusion to the supposed oppressive proceedings of the court of which Mr. Walmsley was registrar, replied, "Sir, I can put her into the Spiritual Court!"

Mr. Walmsley, however, was well pleased with this proof of Johnson's abilities as a dramatic writer, and advised him to finish the tragedy, and produce it on the stage.

Johnson now thought of trying his fortune in London, the great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind have the fullest scope, and the highest encouragement. It is a memorable circumstance that his pupil David Garrick went thither at the same time, with intent to complete his education, and follow the profession of the law, from which he was soon diverted by his decided preference for the stage.

How he employed himself upon his first coming to London is not particularly known. I never heard that he found any protection or encouragement by the means of Mr. Colson, to whose academy David Garrick went. Mrs. Lucy Porter told me, that Mr. Walmsley gave him a letter of introduction to Lintot his bookseller, and that Johnson wrote some things for him; but I imagine this to be a mistake, for I have discovered no trace of it, and I am pretty sure he told me, that Mr. Cave was the first publisher by whom his pen was engaged in London.

He had a little money when he came to town, and he knew how he could live in the cheapest manner. His first lodgings were at the house of Mr. Norris, a staymaker, in Exeter-street, adjoining Catharine-street, in the Strand. "I dined (said he) very well for eight-pence, with very good company, at the Pine-Apple in New-street, just by. Several of them had traveled. They expected to meet every day; but did not know one another's names. It used to cost the rest a shilling, for they drank wine; but I had a cut of meat for six-pence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny; so that I was quite well served, nay, better than the rest, for they gave the waiter nothing."

He at this time, I believe, abstained entirely from fermented liquors: a practice to which he rigidly conformed for many years together, at different periods of his life.

His Ofellus[1] in the *Art of Living in London,* I have heard him relate, was an Irish painter, whom he knew at Birmingham, and who had practised his own precepts of economy for several years in the British capital. He assured Johnson, who, I suppose, was then meditating to try his fortune in London, but was apprehensive of the expense, "that thirty pounds a year was enough to enable a man to live there without being contemptible. He allowed ten pounds for clothes and linen. He said a man might live in a garret at eighteen-pence a week; few people would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say, 'Sir, I am to be found at such a place.' By spending three-pence in a coffee-house, he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for six-pence, breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean-shirt-day* he went abroad, and paid visits." I have heard him more than once talk of his frugal friend, whom he recollected with esteem and kindness, and did not like to have one smile at the recital. "This man (said he, gravely) was a very sensible man, who perfectly understood common affairs: a man of a great deal of knowledge of the world, fresh from life, not strained through books. He borrowed a horse and ten pounds at Birmingham. Finding himself master of so much money, he set off

[1] A character in one of Horace's satires.

for West Chester, in order to get to Ireland. He returned the horse, and probably the ten pounds too, after he got home."

In the course of the summer he returned to Lichfield, where he had left Mrs. Johnson, and there he at last finished his tragedy, which was not executed with his rapidity of composition upon other occasions, but was slowly and painfully elaborated. A few days before his death, while burning a great mass of papers, he picked out from among them the original unformed sketch of this tragedy, in his own handwriting, and gave it to Mr. Langton, by whose favor a copy of it is now in my possession.

He now removed to London with Mrs. Johnson; but her daughter, who had lived with them at Edial, was left with her relations in the country. His lodgings were for some time in Woodstock-street, near Hanover-square, and afterwards in Castle-street, near Cavendish-square. As there is something pleasingly interesting, to many, in tracing so great a man through all his different habitations, I shall, before this work is concluded, present my readers with an exact list of his lodgings and houses, in order of time, which, in placid condescension to my respectful curiosity, he one evening dictated to me, but without specifying how long he lived at each. In the progress of his life I shall have occasion to mention some of them as connected with particular incidents, or with the writing of particular parts of his works. To some, this minute attention may appear trifling; but when we consider the punctilious exactness with which the different houses in which Milton resided have been traced by the writers of his life, a similar enthusiasm may be pardoned in the biographer of Johnson.

His tragedy being by this time, as he thought, completely finished and fit for the stage, he was very desirous that it should be brought forward. Mr. Peter Garrick told me, that Johnson and he went together to the Fountain Tavern, and read it over, and that he afterwards solicited Mr. Fleetwood, the patentee of Drury-lane theater, to have it acted at his house; but Mr. Fleetwood would not accept it, probably because it was not patronized by some man of high rank; and it was not acted till 1749, when his friend David Garrick was manager of that theater.

The Gentleman's Magazine, begun and carried on by Mr. Edward Cave, under the name of SYLVANUS URBAN, had attracted the notice and esteem of Johnson, in an eminent degree, before he came to London as an adventurer in literature. He told me, that when he first saw St. John's Gate, the place where that deservedly popular miscellany was originally printed, he "beheld it with reverence." I suppose, indeed, that every young author has had the same kind of feeling for the magazine or periodical publication which has first entertained him, and in which he has first had an opportunity to see himself in print, without the risk of exposing his name. I myself recollect such impressions from *The Scots Magazine,* which was begun at Edinburgh in the year 1739, and has been ever conducted with judgment, accuracy, and propriety. I yet cannot help thinking of it with an affectionate regard. Johnson has dignified the *Gentleman's Magazine,* by the importance with which he invests the life of Cave; but he has given it still greater luster by the various admirable essays which he wrote for it.

Though Johnson was often solicited by his friends to make a complete list of his writings, and talked of doing it, I believe with a serious intention that they should all be collected on his own account, he put it off from year to year, and at last

died without having done it perfectly. I have one in his own handwriting, which contains a certain number; I indeed doubt if he could have remembered every one of them, as they were so numerous, so various, and scattered in such a multiplicity of unconnected publications; nay, several of them published under the names of other persons, to whom he liberally contributed from the abundance of his mind. We must, therefore, be content to discover them, partly from occasional information given by him to his friends, and partly from internal evidence.

His first performance in the *Gentleman's Magazine,* which for many years was his principal source for employment and support, was a copy of Latin verses, in March 1738, addressed to the editor in so happy a style of compliment, that Cave must have been destitute both of taste and sensibility, had he not felt himself highly gratified.

It appears that he was now enlisted by Mr. Cave as a regular coadjutor in his magazine, by which he probably obtained a tolerable livelihood. At what time, or by what means, he had acquired a competent knowledge both of French and Italian, I do not know; but he was so well skilled in them, as to be sufficiently qualified for a translator. That part of his labor which consisted in emendation and improvement of the productions of other contributors, like that employed in leveling ground, can be perceived only by those who had an opportunity of comparing the original with the altered copy. What we certainly know to have been done by him in this way, was the Debates in both houses of Parliament, under the name of "The Senate of Lilliput," sometimes with feigned denominations of the several speakers, sometimes with denominations formed of the letters of their real names, in the manner of what is called anagram, so that they might easily be deciphered. Parliament then kept the press in a kind of mysterious awe, which made it necessary to have recourse to such devices. In our time it has acquired an unrestrained freedom, so that the people in all parts of the kingdom have a fair, open, and exact report of the actual proceedings of their representatives and legislators, which in our constitution is highly to be valued; though, unquestionably, there has of late been too much reason to complain of the petulance with which obscure scribblers have presumed to treat men of the most respectable character and situation.

This important article of the *Gentleman's Magazine* was, for several years, executed by Mr. William Guthrie, a man who deserves to be respectably recorded in the literary annals of this country. The debates in Parliament, which were brought home and digested by Guthrie, whose memory, though surpassed by others who have since followed him in the same department, was yet very quick and tenacious, were sent by Cave to Johnson for his revision; and, after some time, when Guthrie had attained to greater variety of employment, and the speeches were more and more enriched by the accession of Johnson's genius, it was resolved that he should do the whole himself, from the scanty notes furnished by persons employed to attend in both houses of Parliament. Sometimes, however, as he himself told me, he had nothing more communicated to him than the names of the several speakers, and the part which they had taken in the debate.

Thus was Johnson employed during some of the best years of his life, as a mere literary laborer "for gain, not glory," solely to obtain an honest support. He however indulged himself in occasional little sallies, which the French so happily express by the term *jeux*

d'esprit, and which will be noticed in their order, in the progress of this work.

[1738] But what first displayed his transcendent powers, and "gave the world assurance of the MAN," was his *London, a Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal;* which came out in May this year, and burst forth with a splendor, the rays of which will for ever encircle his name. Boileau had imitated the same satire with great success, applying it to Paris: but an attentive comparison will satisfy every reader, that he is much excelled by the English Juvenal.

Johnson's *London* was published in May 1738; and it is remarkable, that it came out on the same morning with Pope's satire, entitled "1738"; so that England had at once its Juvenal and Horace as poetical monitors. The Reverend Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, to whom I am indebted for some obliging communications, was then a student at Oxford, and remembers well the effect which *London* produced. Every body was delighted with it; and there being no name to it, the first buz of the literary circle was, "here is an unknown poet, greater even than Pope." And it is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of that year, that it "got to the second edition in the course of a week."

Pope, who then filled the poetical throne without a rival, it may reasonably be presumed, must have been particularly struck by the sudden appearance of such a poet; and, to his credit, let it be remembered, that his feelings and conduct on the occasion were candid and liberal. He requested Mr. Richardson, son of the painter, to endeavour to find out who this new author was. Mr. Richardson, after some inquiry, having informed him that he had discovered only that his name was Johnson, and that he was some obscure man, Pope said, "He will soon be *déterré.*" We shall presently see, from a note written by Pope, that he was himself afterwards more successful in his inquiries than his friend.

[1739] Johnson used to be a pretty frequent visitor at the house of Mr. Richardson, author of *Clarissa,* and other novels of extensive reputation. Mr. Hogarth came one day to see Richardson, soon after the execution of Dr. Cameron, for having taken arms for the house of Stuart in 1745-6; and being a warm partisan of George the Second, he observed to Richardson, that certainly there must have been some very unfavourable circumstances lately discovered in this particular case, which had induced the King to approve of an execution for rebellion so long after the time when it was committed, as this had the appearance of putting a man to death in cold blood, and was very unlike his Majesty's usual clemency. While he was talking, he perceived a person standing at a window in the room, shaking his head, and rolling himself about in a strange ridiculous manner. He concluded that he was an idiot, whom his relations had put under the care of Mr. Richardson, as a very good man. To his great surprise, however, this figure stalked forwards to where he and Mr. Richardson were sitting, and all at once took up the argument, and burst out into an invective against George the Second, as one, who, upon all occasions, was unrelenting and barbarous; mentioning many instances, particularly, that when an officer of high rank had been acquitted by a Court Martial, George the Second had with his own hand struck his name off the list. In short, he displayed such a power of eloquence, that Hogarth looked at him with astonishment, and actually imagined that this idiot had been at the moment inspired. Neither Hogarth nor Johnson were made known to each other at this interview.

It does not appear that he wrote any-

thing in 1744 for the *Gentleman's Magazine,* but the Preface. His life of Barretier was now re-published in a pamphlet by itself. But he produced one work this year, fully sufficient to maintain the high reputation which he had acquired. This was *The Life of Richard Savage;*[1] a man, of whom it is difficult to speak impartially, without wondering that he was for some time the intimate companion of Johnson; for his character was marked by profligacy, insolence, and ingratitude: yet, as he undoubtedly had a warm and vigorous, though unregulated mind, had seen life in all its varieties, and been much in the company of the statesmen and wits of his time, he could communicate to Johnson an abundant supply of such materials as his philosophical curiosity most eagerly desired; and as Savage's misfortunes and misconduct had reduced him to the lowest state of wretchedness as a writer for bread, his visits to St. John's Gate naturally brought Johnson and him together.

It is melancholy to reflect, that Johnson and Savage were sometimes in such extreme indigence, that they could not pay for a lodging; so that they have wandered together whole nights in the streets. Yet in these almost incredible scenes of distress, we may suppose that Savage mentioned many of the anecdotes with which Johnson afterwards enriched the life of his unhappy companion, and those of other poets.

He told Sir Joshua Reynolds, that one night in particular, when Savage and he walked round St. James's-square for want of a lodging, they were not at all depressed by their situation; but in high spirits and brimful of patriotism, traversed the square for several hours, inveighed against the minister, and "resolved they would *stand by their country.*"

[1] Poet (died 1743).

It is remarkable, that in this biographical disquisition there appears a very strong symptom of Johnson's prejudice against players; a prejudice that may be attributed to the following causes: first, the imperfection of his organs, which were so defective that he was not susceptible of the fine impressions which theatrical excellence produces upon the generality of mankind; secondly, the cold rejection of his tragedy; and, lastly, the brilliant success of Garrick, who had been his pupil, who had come to London at the same time with him, not in a much more prosperous state than himself, and whose talents he undoubtedly rated low, compared with his own. His being outstripped by his pupil in the race of immediate fame, as well as of fortune, probably made him feel some indignation, as thinking that whatever might be Garrick's merits in his art, the reward was too great when compared with what the most successful efforts of literary labor could attain. At all periods of his life Johnson used to talk contemptuously of players; but in this work he speaks of them with peculiar acrimony; for which, perhaps, there was formerly too much reason from the licentious and dissolute manners of those engaged in that profession It is but justice to add, that in our own time such a change has taken place, that there is no longer room for such an unfavorable distinction.

In 1745 he published a pamphlet entitled, *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth, with Remarks on Sir T. H.'s (Sir Thomas Hanmer's) Edition of Shakespeare.* To which he affixed proposals for a new edition of that poet.

As we do not trace anything else published by him during the course of this year, we may conjecture that he was occupied entirely with that work. But the little encouragement which was given by the public to his anonymous proposals

for the execution of a task which Warburton was known to have undertaken, probably damped his ardor. His pamphlet, however, was highly esteemed, and was fortunate enough to obtain the approbation even of the supercilious Warburton himself, who, in the Preface to his *Shakespeare* published two years afterwards, thus mentioned it: "As to all those things which have been published under the titles of *Essays, Remarks, Observations,* etc., on Shakespeare, if you except some Critical Notes on *Macbeth,* given as a specimen of a projected edition, and written, as appears, by a man of parts and genius, the rest are absolutely below a serious notice."

Of this flattering distinction shown to him by Warburton, a very grateful remembrance was ever entertained by Johnson, who said, "He praised me at a time when praise was of value to me."

In 1746 it is probable that he was still employed upon his *Shakespeare,* which perhaps he laid aside for a time, upon account of the high expectations which were formed of Warburton's edition of that great poet. It is somewhat curious, that his literary career appears to have been almost totally suspended in the years 1745 and 1746, those years which were marked by a civil war in Great Britain, when a rash attempt was made to restore the House of Stuart to the throne. That he had a tenderness for that unfortunate House, is well known; and some may fancifully imagine, that a sympathetic anxiety impeded the exertion of his intellectual powers: but I am inclined to think, that he was, during this time, sketching the outlines of his great philological work.

But the year 1747 is distinguished as the epoch, when Johnson's arduous and important work, his DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, was announced to the world, by the publication of its Plan or *Prospectus.*

How long this immense undertaking had been the object of his contemplation, I do not know. I once asked him by what means he had attained to that astonishing knowledge of our language, by which he was enabled to realize a design of such extent and accumulated difficulty. He told me, that "it was not the effect of particular study; but that it had grown up in his mind insensibly." I have been informed by Mr. James Dodsley, that several years before this period, when Johnson was one day sitting in his brother Robert's [1] shop, he heard his brother suggest to him, that a Dictionary of the English Language would be a work that would be well received by the public; that Johnson seemed at first to catch at the proposition, but, after a pause, said, in his abrupt decisive manner, "I believe I shall not undertake it." That he, however, had bestowed much thought upon the subject, before he published his *Plan,* is evident from the enlarged, clear, and accurate views which it exhibits; and we find him mentioning in that tract, that many of the writers whose testimonies were to be produced as authorities, were selected by Pope; which proves that he had been furnished, probably by Mr. Robert Dodsley, with whatever hints that eminent poet had contributed towards a great literary project, that had been the subject of important consideration in a former reign.

The booksellers who contracted with Johnson, single and unaided, for the execution of a work, which in other countries has not been effected but by the coöperating exertions of many, were Mr. Robert Dodsley, Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messieurs Longman, and the two Messieurs Knapton. The price

[1] Publisher.

stipulated was fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds.

The *Plan* was addressed to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, then one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State; a nobleman who was very ambitious of literary distinction, and who, upon being informed of the design, had expressed himself in terms very favorable to its success. There is, perhaps, in everything of any consequence, a secret history which it would be amusing to know, could we have it authentically communicated. Johnson told me, "Sir, the way in which the *Plan* of my *Dictionary* came to be inscribed to Lord Chesterfield, was this: I had neglected to write it by the time appointed. Dodsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for delay, that it might be better done, and let Dodsley have his desire. I said to my friend, Dr. Bathurst, 'Now, if any good comes of my addressing to Lord Chesterfield, it will be ascribed to deep policy,' when, it fact, it was only a casual excuse for laziness."

It is worthy of observation, that the *Plan* has not only the substantial merit of comprehension, perspicuity, and precision, but that the language of it is unexceptionably excellent; it being altogether free from that inflation of style, and those uncommon but apt and energetic words, which in some of his writings have been censured, with more petulance than justice; and never was there a more dignified strain of compliment than that in which he courts the attention of one, who, he had been persuaded to believe, would be a respectable patron.

"With regard to questions of purity or propriety (says he), I was once in doubt whether I should not attribute to myself too much in attempting to decide them, and whether my province was to extend beyond the proposition of the question, and the display of the suffrages on each side; but I have been since determined by your Lordship's opinion, to interpose my own judgment, and shall therefore endeavor to support what appears to me most consonant to grammar and reason. Ausonius thought that modesty forbade him to plead inability for a task to which Cæsar had judged him equal:

Cur me posse negem, posse quod ille putat? [1]

And I may hope, my Lord, that since you, whose authority in our language is so generally acknowledged, have commissioned me to declare my own opinion, I shall be considered as exercising a kind of vicarious jurisdiction; and that the power which might have been denied to my own claim, will be readily allowed me as the delegate of your Lordship."

This passage proves, that Johnson's addressing his "Plan" to Lord Chesterfield was not merely in consequence of the result of a report by means of Dodsley, that the Earl favored the design, but that there had been a particular communication with his Lordship concerning it. Dr. Taylor told me, that Johnson sent his *Plan* to him in manuscript, for his perusal; and that when it was lying upon his table, Mr. William Whitehead happened to pay him a visit, and being shown it, was highly pleased with such parts of it as he had time to read, and begged to take it home with him, which he was allowed to do; that from him it got into the hands of a noble Lord, who carried it to Lord Chesterfield. When Taylor observed this might be an advantage, Johnson replied, "No, Sir, it would have come out with more bloom, if it had not been seen before by anybody."

The opinion conceived of it by another noble author, appears from the following

[1] Why deny that I can do what he thinks I can?

extract of a letter from the Earl of Orrery to Dr. Birch:

"Caledon, Dec. 30, 1747.

"I have just now seen the specimen of Mr. Johnson's Dictionary, addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I am much pleased with the plan, and I think the specimen is one of the best that I have ever read. Most specimens disgust, rather than prejudice us in favor of the work to follow; but the language of Mr. Johnson's is good, and the arguments are properly and modestly expressed. However, some expressions may be caviled at, but they are trifles. I'll mention one: the *barren* laurel. The laurel is not barren, in any sense whatever; it bears fruits and flowers. *Sed hæ sunt nugæ*,[1] and I have great expectations from the performance."

That he was fully aware of the arduous nature of the undertaking, he acknowledges; and shows himself perfectly sensible of it in the conclusion of his *Plan;* but he had a noble consciousness of his own abilities, which enabled him to go on with undaunted spirit.

Dr. Adams found him one day busy at his *Dictionary,* when the following dialogue ensued.—"ADAMS. This is a great work, Sir. How are you to get all the etymologies? JOHNSON. Why, Sir, here is a shelf with Junius, and Skinner, and others; and there is a Welsh gentleman who has published a collection of Welsh proverbs, who will help me with the Welsh. ADAMS. But, Sir, how can you do this in three years? JOHNSON. Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years. ADAMS. But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their Dictionary. JOHNSON. Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman." With so much ease and pleasantry could he talk of that prodigious labor which he had undertaken to execute.

The public has had, from another pen,[2] a long detail of what had been done in this country by prior lexicographers; and no doubt Johnson was wise to avail himself of them, so far as they went: but the learned, yet judicious research of etymology, the various, yet accurate display of definition, and the rich collection of authorities, were reserved for the superior mind of our great philologist. For the mechanical part he employed, as he told me, six amanuenses; and let it be remembered by the natives of North Britain, to whom he is supposed to have been so hostile, that five of them were of that country. There were two Messieurs Macbean; Mr. Shiels, who, we shall hereafter see, partly wrote the *Lives of the Poets* to which the name of Cibber is affixed: Mr. Stewart, son of Mr. George Stewart, bookseller at Edinburgh; and a Mr. Maitland. The sixth of these humble assistants was Mr. Peyton, who, I believe, taught French, and published some elementary tracts.

To all these painful laborers Johnson showed a never ceasing kindness, so far as they stood in need of it. The elder Mr. Macbean had afterwards the honor of being Librarian to Archibald, Duke of Argyle, for many years, but was left without a shilling. Johnson wrote for him a Preface to *A System of Ancient Geography;* and, by the favor of Lord Thurlow, got him admitted a poor brother of the Charter-house. For Shiels, who died of a consumption, he had much tenderness; and it has been thought that some choice sentences in the *Lives of the Poets* were supplied by him. Peyton, when reduced to penury, had frequent aid from the bounty of Johnson, who at last

[1] But these are trifles.

[2] Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*

was at the expense of burying both him and his wife.

While the *Dictionary* was going forward, Johnson lived part of the time in Holborn, part in Gough-square, Fleet-street; and he had an upper room fitted up like a counting-house for the purpose, in which he gave to the copyists their several tasks. The words, partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the passages with a black-lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced. I have seen several of them, in which that trouble had not been taken; so that they were just as when used by the copyists. It is remarkable, that he was so attentive in the choice of the passages in which words were authorized, that one may read page after page of his *Dictionary* with improvement and pleasure; and it should not pass unobserved, that he has quoted no author whose writings had a tendency to hurt sound religion and morality.

The necessary expense of preparing a work of such magnitude for the press, must have been a considerable deduction from the price stipulated to be paid for the copyright. I understand that nothing was allowed by the booksellers on that account; and I remember his telling me, that a large portion of it having, by mistake, been written upon both sides of the paper, so as to be inconvenient for the compositor, it cost him twenty pounds to have it transcribed upon one side only.

He is now to be considered as "tugging at his oar," as engaged in a steady continued course of occupation, sufficient to employ all his time for some years; and which was the best preventive of that constitutional melancholy which was ever lurking about him, ready to trouble his quiet. But his enlarged and lively mind could not be satisfied without more diversity of employment, and the pleasure of animated relaxation. He therefore not only exerted his talents in occasional composition, very different from Lexicography, but formed a club in Ivy-lane, Paternoster Row, with a view to enjoy literary discussion, and amuse his evening hours. The members associated with him in this little society were, his beloved friend Dr. Richard Bathurst, Mr. Hawkesworth, afterwards well known by his writings, Mr. John Hawkins, an attorney, and a few others of different professions.

[1749] Garrick being now vested with theatrical power by being manager of Drury-lane theater, he kindly and generously made use of it to bring out Johnson's tragedy, which had been long kept back for want of encouragement. But in this benevolent purpose he met with no small difficulty from the temper of Johnson, which could not brook that a drama which he had formed with much study, and had been obliged to keep more than the nine years of Horace, should be revised and altered at the pleasure of an actor. Yet Garrick knew well, that without some alterations it would not be fit for the stage. A violent dispute having ensued between them, Garrick applied to the Reverend Dr. Taylor to interpose. Johnson was at first very obstinate. "Sir" (said he), the fellow wants me to make Mahomet run mad, that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels." He was, however, at last, with difficulty, prevailed on to comply with Garrick's wishes, so as to allow of some changes; but still there were not enough.

Dr. Adams was present the first night of the representation of *Irene*, and gave me the following account: "Before the

curtain drew up, there were catcalls whistling, which alarmed Johnson's friends. The Prologue, which was written by himself in a manly strain, soothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably, till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bow-string round her neck. The audience cried out *'Murder! Murder!'* She several times attempted to speak; but in vain. At last she was obliged to go off the stage alive." This passage was afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, as the play now has it. The Epilogue, as Johnson informed me, was written by Sir William Yonge. I know not how his play came to be thus graced by the pen of a person then so eminent in the political world.

Notwithstanding all the support of such performers as Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and every advantage of dress and decoration, the tragedy of *Irene* did not please the public. Mr. Garrick's zeal carried it through for nine nights, so that the author had his three nights' profits; [1] and from a receipt signed by him, now in the hands of Mr. James Dodsley, it appears that his friend, Mr. Robert Dodsley, gave him one hundred pounds for the copy, with his usual reservation of the right of one edition.

In 1750 he came forth in the character for which he was eminently qualified, a majestic teacher of moral and religious wisdom. The vehicle which he chose was that of a periodical paper, which he knew had been, upon former occasions, employed with great success. The *Tatler, Spectator,* and *Guardian,* were the last of the kind published in England, which had stood the test of a long trial; and such an interval had now elapsed since their publication, as made him justly think that, to many of his readers, this form of instruction would, in some degree, have the advantage of novelty. A few days before the first of his Essays came out, there started another competitor for fame in the same form, under the title of *The Tatler Revived,* which I believe was "born but to die." Johnson was, I think, not very happy in the choice of his title, *The Rambler;* which certainly is not suited to a series of grave and moral discourses; which the Italians have literally, but ludicrously, translated by *Il Vagabondo;* and which has been lately assumed as the denomination of a vehicle of licentious tales, *The Rambler's Magazine.* He gave Sir Joshua Reynolds the following account of its getting this name: "What *must* be done, Sir, *will* be done. When I was to begin publishing that paper, I was at a loss how to name it. I sat down at night upon my bedside, and resolved that I would not go to sleep till I had fixed its title. *The Rambler* seemed the best that occurred, and I took it."

The first paper of *The Rambler* was published on Tuesday the 20th of March, 1750; and its author was enabled to continue it, without interruption, every Tuesday and Saturday, till Saturday the 17th of March,[2] 1752, on which day it closed. This is a strong confirmation of the truth of a remark of his, which I have had occasion to quote elsewhere, that "a man may write at any time, if he will set himself doggedly to it;" for, notwithstanding his constitutional indolence, his depression of spirits, and his labor in carrying on his *Dictionary,* he answered the stated calls of the press twice a week from the stores of his mind, during all that time; having received no assistance, except four billets in No. 10, by Miss Mulso, now Mrs. Chapone; No. 30, by Mrs. Catharine Talbot; No. 97, by Mr. Samuel Richardson, whom he de-

[1] £195/17/9.

[2] Mistake for 14th.

scribes in an introductory note as "An author who has enlarged the knowledge of human nature, and taught the passions to move at the command of virtue;" and Nos. 44 and 100, by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter.

Posterity will be astonished when they are told, upon the authority of Johnson himself, that many of these discourses, which we should suppose had been labored with all the slow attention of literary leisure, were written in haste as the moment pressed, without even being read over by him before they were printed. It can be accounted for only in this way; that by reading and meditation, and a very close inspection of life, he had accumulated a great fund of miscellaneous knowledge, which, by a peculiar promptitude of mind, was ever ready at his call, and which he had constantly accustomed himself to clothe in the most apt and energetic expression. Sir Joshua Reynolds once asked him by what means he had attained his extraordinary accuracy and flow of language. He told him, that he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion, and in every company: to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expressions to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him.

Though instruction be the predominant purpose of *The Rambler*, yet it is enlivened with a considerable portion of amusement. Nothing can be more erroneous than the notion which some persons have entertained, that Johnson was then a retired author, ignorant of the world; and, of consequence, that he wrote only from his imagination when he described characters and manners. He said to me, that before he wrote that work, he had been "running about the world," as he expressed it, more than almost anybody; and I have heard him relate, with much satisfaction, that several of the characters in *The Rambler* were drawn so naturally that when it first circulated in numbers, a club in one of the towns in Essex imagined themselves to be severally exhibited in it, and were much incensed against a person who, they suspected, had thus made them objects of public notice; nor were they quieted till authentic assurance was given them, that *The Rambler* was written by a person who had never heard of any one of them. Some of the characters are believed to have been actually drawn from the life, particularly that of Prospero from Garrick, who never entirely forgave its pointed satire. For instances of fertility of fancy, and accurate description of real life, I appeal to No. 19, a man who wanders from one profession to another, with most plausible reasons for every change: No. 34, female fastidiousness and timorous refinement: No. 82, a Virtuoso who has collected curiosities: No. 88, petty modes of entertaining a company, and conciliating kindness: No. 182, fortune-hunting: No. 194-195, a tutor's account of the follies of his pupil: No. 197-198, legacy-hunting. He has given a specimen of his nice observation of the mere external appearances of life, in the following passage in No. 179, against affectation, that frequent and most disgusting quality: "He that stands to contemplate the crowds that fill the streets of a populous city, will see many passengers whose air and motions it will be difficult to behold without contempt and laughter; but if he examine what are the appearances that thus powerfully excite his risibility, he will find among them neither poverty nor disease, nor any involuntary or painful defect. The disposition to derision and insult, is awakened by the softness of foppery, the swell of

insolence, the liveliness of levity, or the solemnity of grandeur; by the sprightly trip, the stately stalk, the formal strut, and the lofty mien; by gestures intended to catch the eye, and by looks elaborately formed as evidences of importance."

[1752] His acquaintance with Bennet Langton, Esq. of Langton, in Lincolnshire, another much valued friend, commenced soon after the conclusion of his *Rambler;* which that gentleman, then a youth, had read with so much admiration, that he came to London chiefly with a view of endeavoring to be introduced to its author. By a fortunate chance he happened to take lodgings in a house where Mr. Levet frequently visited; and having mentioned his wish to his landlady, she introduced him to Mr. Levet, who readily obtained Johnson's permission to bring Mr. Langton to him; as, indeed, Johnson, during the whole course of his life, had no shyness, real or affected, but was easy of access to all who were properly recommended, and even wished to see numbers at his *levee,* as his morning circle of company might, with strict propriety, be called. Mr. Langton was exceedingly surprised when the sage first appeared. He had not received the smallest intimation of his figure, dress, or manner. From perusing his writings, he fancied he should see a decent, well-dressed, in short, a remarkably decorous philosopher. Instead of which, down from his bed-chamber, about noon, came, as newly risen, a huge, uncouth figure, with a little dark wig which scarcely covered his head, and his clothes hanging loose about him. But his conversation was so rich, so animated, and so forcible, and his religious and political notions so congenial with those in which Langton had been educated, that he conceived for him that veneration and attachment which he ever preserved. Johnson was not the less ready to love Mr. Langton, for his being of a very ancient family; for I have heard him say, with pleasure, "Langton, Sir, has a grant of free-warren from Henry the Second; and Cardinal Stephen Langton, in King John's reign, was of this family."

One night, when Beauclerk [1] and Langton had supped at a tavern in London, and sat till about three in the morning, it came into their heads to go and knock up Johnson, and see if they could prevail on him to join them in a ramble. They rapped violently at the door of his chambers in the Temple, till at last he appeared in his shirt, with his little black wig on the top of his head, instead of a night-cap, and a poker in his hand, imagining, probably, that some ruffians were coming to attack him. When he discovered who they were, and was told their errand, he smiled, and with great good humor agreed to their proposal: "What, is it you, you dogs! I'll have a frisk with you." He was soon dressed, and they sallied forth together into Covent Garden, where the greengrocers and fruiterers were beginning to arrange their hampers, just come in from the country. Johnson made some attempts to help them; but the honest gardeners stared so at his figure and manner, and odd interference, that he soon saw his services were not relished. They then repaired to one of the neighboring taverns, and made a bowl of that liquor called *Bishop,*[2] which Johnson had always liked: while in joyous contempt of sleep, from which he had been roused, he repeated the festive lines,

> "Short, O short then be thy reign,
> And give us to the world again!"

They did not stay long, but walked down to the Thames, took a boat, and rowed to Billingsgate. Beauclerk and Johnson were so well pleased with their

[1] Dissolute friend of Langton's.

[2] A mixture of wine, oranges, and sugar.

amusement, that they resolved to persevere in dissipation for the rest of the day; but Langton deserted them, being engaged to breakfast with some young ladies. Johnson scolded him for "leaving his social friends to go and sit with a set of wretched *un-idea'd* girls." Garrick being told of this ramble, said to him smartly, "I heard of your frolic t'other night. You'll be in the Chronicle." Upon which Johnson afterwards observed, "*He* durst not do such a thing. His *wife* would not *let* him!"

[1754] The *Dictionary,* we may believe, afforded Johnson full occupation this year. As it approached to its conclusion, he probably worked with redoubled vigor, as seamen increase their exertion and alacrity when they have a near prospect of their haven.

Lord Chesterfield, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his Lordship the *Plan* of his *Dictionary,* had behaved to him in such a manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his Lordship's antechamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return. I remember having mentioned this story to George Lord Lyttleton, who told me, he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield; and holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield by saying that "Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the back-stairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes." It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned, by the authority which I have mentioned; but Johnson himself assured me, that there was not the least foundation for it. He told me, that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; but that his Lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him. When the *Dictionary* was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to soothe and insinuate himself with the sage, conscious as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned author; and further attempted to conciliate him, by writing two papers in *The World,* in recommendation of the work; and it must be confessed, that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no previous offence, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments, he was peculiarly gratified.

His Lordship says, "I think the public in general, and the republic of letters in particular, are greatly obliged to Mr. Johnson, for having undertaken, and executed so great and desirable a work. Perfection is not to be expected from man: but if we are to judge by the various works of Johnson already published, we have good reason to believe, that he will bring this as near to perfection as any man could do. The *Plan* of it, which he published some years ago, seems to me to be a proof of it. Nothing can be more rationally imagined, or more accurately

and elegantly expressed. I therefore recommend the previous perusal of it to all those who intend to buy the *Dictionary*, and who, I suppose, are all those who can afford it.

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"It must be owned, that our language is, at present, in a state of anarchy, and hitherto, perhaps, it may not have been the worse for it. During our free and open trade, many words and expressions have been imported, adopted, and naturalized from other languages, which have greatly enriched our own. Let it still preserve what real strength and beauty it may have borrowed from others; but let it not, like the Tarpeian maid, be overwhelmed and crushed by unnecessary ornaments. The time for discrimination seems to be now come. Toleration, adoption, and naturalization have run their lengths. Good order and authority are now necessary. But where shall we find them, and at the same time, the obedience due to them? We must have recourse to the old Roman expedient in times of confusion, and choose a dictator. Upon this principle, I give my vote for Mr. Johnson, to fill that great and arduous post, and I hereby declare, that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson, during the term of his dictatorship. Nay more, I will not only obey him like an old Roman, as my dictator, but, like a modern Roman, I will implicitly believe in him as my Pope, and hold him to be infallible while in the chair, but no longer. More than this he cannot well require; for, I presume, that obedience can never be expected, where there is neither terror to enforce, nor interest to invite it.

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"But a Grammar, a Dictionary, and a History of our Language, through its several stages, were still wanting at home, and importunately called for from abroad. Mr. Johnson's labors will now, I dare say, very fully supply that want, and greatly contribute to the farther spreading of our language in other countries. Learners were discouraged, by finding no standard to resort to; and, consequently, thought it incapable of any. They will now be undeceived and encouraged."

This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that "all was false and hollow," despised the honeyed words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should, for a moment, imagine that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, "Sir, after making great professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a scribbling in *The World* about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him."

This is that celebrated letter of which so much has been said, and about which curiosity has been so long excited, without being gratified. I for many years solicited Johnson to favor me with a copy of it, that so excellent a composition might not be lost to posterity. He delayed from time to time to give it me; till at last in 1781, when we were on a visit at Mr. Dilly's, at Southill in Bedfordshire, he was pleased to dictate it to me from memory. He afterwards found among his papers a copy of it, which he had dictated to Mr. Baretti, with its title and corrections, in his own handwriting. This he gave to Mr. Langton; adding that if it were to come into print, he wished it to be from that copy. By Mr. Langton's kindness, I am enabled to enrich my work with a

perfect transcript of what the world has so eagerly desired to see.

"To the Right Honorable the Earl of Chesterfield.

"my lord, February 7, 1755.

"I have been lately informed, by the proprietor of the World, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honor, which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre;*—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could! and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my Lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

"The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

"Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

"Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

"My Lord,
"Your Lordship's most humble
"Most obedient servant,
"Sam. Johnson."

That Lord Chesterfield must have been mortified by the lofty contempt, and polite, yet keen, satire with which Johnson exhibited him to himself in this letter, it is impossible to doubt. He, however, with that glossy duplicity which was his constant study, affected to be quite unconcerned. Dr. Adams mentioned to Mr. Robert Dodsley that he was sorry Johnson had written his letter to Lord Chesterfield. Dodsley, with the true feelings of trade, said "he was very sorry too; for that he had a property in the *Dictionary,* to which his Lordship's patronage might have been of consequence." He then told Dr. Adams, that Lord Chesterfield had shown him the letter. "I should have imagined (replied Dr. Adams) that Lord Chesterfield would have concealed

it." "Poh! (said Dodsley) do you think a letter from Johnson could hurt Lord Chesterfield? Not at all, Sir. It lay upon his table, where anybody might see it. He read it to me; said, 'this man has great powers,' pointed out the severest passages, and observed how well they were expressed." This air of indifference, which imposed upon the worthy Dodsley, was certainly nothing but a specimen of that dissimulation which Lord Chesterfield inculcated as one of the most essential lessons for the conduct of life. His Lordship endeavored to justify himself to Dodsley from the charges brought against him by Johnson; but we may judge of the flimsiness of his defence, from his having excused his neglect of Johnson, by saying, that "he had heard he had changed his lodgings, and did not know where he lived;" as if there could have been the smallest difficulty to inform himself of that circumstance, by inquiring in the literary circle with which his Lordship was well acquainted, and was, indeed, himself, one of its ornaments.

Dr. Adams expostulated with Johnson, and suggested, that his not being admitted when he called on him, was probably not to be imputed to Lord Chesterfield; for his Lordship had declared to Dodsley, that "he would have turned off the best servant he ever had, if he had known that he denied him to a man who would have been always more than welcome;" and in confirmation of this, he insisted on Lord Chesterfield's general affability and easiness of access, especially to literary men. "Sir (said Johnson) that is not Lord Chesterfield; he is the proudest man this day existing." "No, (said Dr. Adams) there is one person, at least, as proud; I think, by your own account you are the prouder man of the two." "But mine (replied Johnson instantly) was *defensive* pride." This, as Dr. Adams well observed, was one of those happy turns for which he was so remarkably ready.

Johnson having now explicitly avowed his opinion of Lord Chesterfield, did not refrain from expressing himself concerning that nobleman with pointed freedom: "This man (said he) I thought had been a Lord among wits; but, I find, he is only a wit among Lords!"

[1755] The *Dictionary,* with a *Grammar and History of the English Language,* being now at length published, in two volumes folio, the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work achieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies. Vast as his powers were, I cannot but think that his imagination deceived him, when he supposed that by constant application he might have performed the task in three years. Let the Preface be attentively perused, in which is given, in a clear, strong, and glowing style, a comprehensive, yet particular view of what he had done; and it will be evident, that the time he employed upon it was comparatively short. I am unwilling to swell my book with long quotations from what is in everybody's hands, and I believe there are few prose compositions in the English language that are read with more delight, or are more impressed upon the memory, than that preliminary discourse.

The extensive reading which was absolutely necessary for the accumulation of authorities, and which alone may account for Johnson's retentive mind being enriched with a very large and various store of knowledge and imagery, must have occupied several years. The Preface furnishes an eminent instance of a double talent, of which Johnson was fully conscious. Sir Joshua Reynolds heard him say, "There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is an introduction to any literary work, stating

what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner: the other is a conclusion, showing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to what the author promised to himself and to the public."

How should puny scribblers be abashed and disappointed, when they find him displaying a perfect theory of lexicographical excellence, yet at the same time candidly and modestly allowing that he "had not satisfied his own expectations." Here was a fair occasion for the exercise of Johnson's modesty, when he was called upon to compare his own arduous performance, not with those of other individuals (in which case his inflexible regard to truth would have been violated had he affected diffidence), but with speculative perfection; as he, who can outstrip all his competitors in the race, may yet be sensible of his deficiency when he runs against time. Well might he say, that "the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned;" for he told me, that the only aid which he received was a paper containing twenty etymologies, sent to him by a person then unknown, who he was afterwards informed was Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester. The etymologies, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not, I think, entitled to the first praise amongst the various parts of this immense work. The definitions have always appeared to me such astonishing proofs of acuteness of intellect and precision of language, as indicate a genius of the highest rank. This it is which marks the superior excellence of Johnson's *Dictionary* over others equally or even more voluminous, and must have made it a work of much greater mental labor than mere Lexicons, or *Word-Books*, as the Dutch call them. They, who will make the experiment of trying how they can define a few words of whatever nature, will soon be satisfied of the unquestionable justice of this observation, which I can assure my readers is founded upon much study, and upon communication with more minds than my own.

A few of his definitions must be admitted to be erroneous. Thus, *Windward* and *Leeward*, though directly of opposite meaning, are defined identically the same way; as to which inconsiderable specks it is enough to observe, that his Preface announces that he was aware there might be many such in so immense a work; nor was he at all disconcerted when an instance was pointed out to him. A lady once asked him how he came to define *Pastern* the *knee* of a horse: instead of making an elaborate defence, as she expected, he at once answered, "Ignorance, Madame, pure ignorance." His definition of *Network* [1] has been often quoted with sportive malignity, as obscuring a thing in itself very plain. But to these frivolous censures no other answer is necessary than that with which we are furnished by his own Preface. "To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found. For as nothing can be proved but by supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit of definition. Sometimes easier words are changed into harder; as, *burial*, into *sepulture* or *interment; dry*, into *desiccative; dryness*, into *siccity* or *aridity; fit*, into *paroxysm;* for, the *easiest* word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy."

His introducing his own opinions, and even prejudices, under general definitions of words, while at the same time the original meaning of the words is not explained, as his *Tory, Whig, Pension, Oats, Excise,* and a few more, cannot be fully

[1] "Anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances, with interstices between the intersections."

defended, and must be placed to the account of capricious and humorous indulgence. Talking to me upon this subject when we were at Ashbourne in 1777, he mentioned a still stronger instance of the predominance of his private feelings in the composition of this work, than any now to be found in it. "You know, Sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the *Renegado,* after telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, *Sometimes we say a* Gower. Thus it went to the press: but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out."

Let it, however, be remembered, that this indulgence does not display itself only in sarcasm towards others, but sometimes in playful allusion to the notions commonly entertained of his own laborious task. Thus: *"Grub-street,* the name of a street in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, *dictionaries,* and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called *Grub-street."—"Lexicographer,* a writer of dictionaries, a *harmless drudge."*

[1763] Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russel Street, Covent Garden,[1] told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him: but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated for her beauty), though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlor, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us,—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary,* in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson, (said I) I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light

[1] No. 8.—The very place where I was fortunate enough to be introduced to the illustrious subject of this work, deserves to be particularly marked. I never pass by it without feeling reverence and regret.

(Boswell)

pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir, (said he, with a stern look,) I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil.[1] I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think, that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardor been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without marking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

"People (he remarked) may be taken in once, who imagine that an author is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities for their exertion.

"In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do everything for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men's attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind."

"Sir, this book (*The Elements of Criticism,* which he had taken up), is a pretty essay, and deserves to be held in some estimation, though much of it is chimerical."

Speaking of one who with more than ordinary boldness attacked public measures and the royal family, he said, "I think he is safe from the law, but he is an abusive scoundrel; and instead of applying to my Lord Chief Justice to punish him, I would send half a dozen footmen and have him well ducked."

"The notion of liberty amuses the people of England, and helps to keep off the *tedium vitæ.* When a butcher tells you that *his heart bleeds for his country,* he has, in fact, no uneasy feeling."

[1] That this was a momentary sally against Garrick there can be no doubt; for at Johnson's desire he had, some years before, given a benefit-night at his theatre to this very person, by which she had got two hundred pounds. Johnson, indeed, upon all other occasions, when I was in his company, praised the very liberal charity of Garrick. I once mentioned to him, "It is observed, Sir, that you attack Garrick yourself, but will suffer nobody else to do it." JOHNSON (smiling), "Why, Sir, that is true." (Boswell).

"Sheridan will not succeed at Bath with his oratory. Ridicule has gone down before him, and I doubt, Derrick is his enemy.[1]

"Derrick may do very well, as long as he can outrun his character; but the moment his character gets up with him, it is all over."

It is, however, but just to record, that some years afterwards, when I reminded him of this sarcasm, he said, "Well, but Derrick has now got a character that he need not run away from."

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigor of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill, and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den"; an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson,[1] as translations of *Ossian,* was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a *Dissertation,* not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of *Homer* and *Virgil;* and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topic, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book, when the author is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously: but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty: he had on a little old shriveled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these

[1] Mr. Sheridan was then reading lectures upon Oratory at Bath, where Derrick was Master of the Ceremonies; or, as the phrase is, King. (Boswell)

[1] He published two epic poems which he alleged to be translations from the Gaelic of a poet called Ossian.

slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go."—"Sir, (said I), I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me."

When I rose a second time, he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me, that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favor me with his company one evening at my lodgings: and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavor to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke, at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physics at Edinburgh, and upon the Continent: and I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at Universities to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when luckily for him his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the author of *An Enquiry into the present State of polite Learning in Europe,* and of *The Citizen of the World,* a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. *"Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit."* [1] His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick,

[1] He touched nothing which he did not adorn.

but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there: but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation; but, in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi,*[1] and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself."

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinized; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham, a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield.* But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, Sir, (said he,) a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveler;* and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after the *Traveler* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:

"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he pro-

[1] a madcap

duced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

He [1] recommended to me to keep a journal of my life, full and unreserved. He said it would be a very good exercise, and would yield me great satisfaction when the particulars were faded from my remembrance. I was uncommonly fortunate in having had a previous coincidence of opinion with him upon this subject, for I had kept such a journal for some time; and it was no small pleasure to me to have this to tell him, and to receive his approbation. He counseled me to keep it private, and said I might surely have a friend who would burn it in case of my death. From this habit I have been enabled to give the world so many anecdotes, which would otherwise have been lost to posterity. I mentioned that I was afraid I put into my journal too many little incidents. JOHNSON. "There is nothing, Sir, too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great art of having as little misery and as much happiness as possible."

At night, Mr. Johnson and I supped in a private room at the Turk's Head coffee-house, in the Strand. "I encourage this house (said he,) for the mistress of it is a good civil woman, and has not much business."

"Sir, I love the acquaintance of young people; because, in the first place, I don't like to think myself growing old. In the next place, young acquaintances must last longest, if they do last; and then, Sir, young men have more virtue than old men; they have more generous sentiments in every respect. I love the young dogs of this age, they have more wit and humor and knowledge of life than we had; but then the dogs are not so good scholars. Sir, in my early years I read very hard. It is a sad reflection but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now. My judgment, to be sure, was not so good; but, I had all the facts. I remember very well, when I was at Oxford, an old gentleman said to me, 'Young man, ply your book diligently now, and acquire a stock of knowledge; for when years come upon you, you will find that poring upon books will be but an irksome task.' "

This account of his reading, given by himself in plain words, sufficiently confirms what I have already advanced upon the disputed question as to his application. It reconciles any seeming inconsistency in his way of talking upon it at different times; and shows that idleness and reading hard were with him relative terms, the import of which, as used by him, must be gathered from a comparison with what scholars of different degrees of ardor and assiduity have been known to do. And let it be remembered, that he was now talking spontaneously, and expressing his genuine sentiments; whereas at other times he might be induced, from his spirit of contradiction, or more properly from his love of argumentative contest, to speak lightly of his own application to study. It is pleasing to consider that the old gentleman's gloomy prophecy as to the irksomeness of books to men of an advanced age, which is too often fulfilled, was so far from being verified in Johnson, that his ardor for literature never failed, and his last writings had more ease and vivacity than any of his earlier productions.

He mentioned to me now, for the first time, that he had been distressed by melancholy, and for that reason had been obliged to fly from study and meditation,

[1] Johnson

to the dissipating variety of life. Against melancholy he recommended constant occupation of mind, a great deal of exercise, moderation in eating and drinking, and especially to shun drinking at night. He said melancholy people were apt to fly to intemperance for relief, but that it sunk them much deeper in misery. He observed, that laboring men who work hard, and live sparingly, are seldom or never troubled with low spirits.

He said, Dr. Joseph Warton was a very agreeable man, and his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope,* a very pleasing book. I wondered that he delayed so long to give us the continuation of it. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I suppose he finds himself a little disappointed, in not having been able to persuade the world to be of his opinion as to Pope."

We have now been favored with the concluding volume, in which, to use a parliamentary expression, he has *explained,* so as not to appear quite so adverse to the opinion of the world, concerning Pope, as was at first thought; and we must all agree, that his work is a most valuable accession to English literature.

A writer of deserved eminence being mentioned, Johnson said, "Why, Sir, he is a man of good parts, but being originally poor, he has got a love of mean company and low jocularity; a very bad thing, Sir. To laugh is good, as to talk is good. But you ought no more to think it enough if you laugh, than you are to think it enough if you talk. You may laugh in as many ways as you talk; and surely *every* way of talking that is practised cannot be esteemed."

He maintained that a boy at school was the happiest of human beings. I supported a different opinion, from which I have never yet varied, that a man is happier: and I enlarged upon the anxiety and sufferings which are endured at school. JOHNSON. "Ah! Sir, a boy's being flogged is not so severe as a man's having the hiss of the world against him. Men have a solicitude about fame; and the greater share they have of it, the more afraid they are of losing it." I silently asked myself, "Is it possible that the great SAMUEL JOHNSON really entertains any such apprehension, and is not confident that his exalted fame is established upon a foundation never to be shaken?"

On Tuesday, July 26, I found Mr. Johnson alone. It was a very wet day, and I again complained of the disagreeable effects of such weather. JOHNSON. "Sir, this is all imagination, which physicians encourage; for man lives in air, as a fish lives in water, so that if the atmosphere press heavy from above, there is an equal resistance from below. To be sure, bad weather is hard upon people who are obliged to be abroad; and men cannot labor so well in the open air in bad weather, as in good: but, Sir, a smith or a tailor, whose work is within doors, will surely do as much in rainy weather, as in fair. Some very delicate frames, indeed, may be affected by wet weather; but not common constitutions."

We talked of the education of children; and I asked him what he thought was best to teach them first. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the mean time your breech is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child first, another boy has learnt them both."

On Thursday, July 28, we again supped in private at the Turk's Head coffee-house. JOHNSON, "Swift has a higher reputation than he deserves. His excellence is strong sense; for his humor, though very well, is not remarkably

good. I doubt whether the *Tale of a Tub* be his; for he never owned it, and it is much above his usual manner."

"Thomson, I think, had as much of the poet about him as most writers. Everything appeared to him through the medium of his favorite pursuit. He could not have viewed those two candles burning but with a poetical eye."

"Has not —— a great deal of wit, Sir?" JOHNSON. "I do not think so, Sir. He is, indeed, continually attempting wit, but he fails. And I have no more pleasure in hearing a man attempting wit and failing, than in seeing a man trying to leap over a ditch and tumbling into it."

He laughed heartily when I mentioned to him a saying of his concerning Mr. Thomas Sheridan, which Foote took a wicked pleasure to circulate. "Why, Sir, Sherry is dull, naturally dull; but it must have taken him a great deal of pains to become what we now see him. Such an excess of stupidity, Sir, is not in Nature." —"So (said he,) I allowed him all his own merit."

He now added, "Sheridan cannot bear me. I bring his declamation to a point. I ask him a plain question, 'What do you mean to teach?' Besides, Sir, what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country, by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover, to show light at Calais."

At supper this night he talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. "Some people (said he) have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously, and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly, will hardly mind any thing else." He now appeared to me *Jean Bull philosophe,* and he was for the moment, not only serious but vehement. Yet I have heard him, upon other occasions, talk with great contempt of people who were anxious to gratify their palates; and the 206th number of his *Rambler* is a masterly essay against gulosity. His practice, indeed, I must acknowledge, may be considered as casting the balance of his different opinions upon this subject; for I never knew any man who relished good eating more than he did. When at table, he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment; his looks seemed riveted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite: which was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness, that while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. To those whose sensations were delicate, this could not but be disgusting; and it was doubtless not very suitable to the character of a philosopher, who should be distinguished by self-command. But it must be owned, that Johnson, though he could be rigidly *abstemious,* was not a *temperate* man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain, but he could not use moderately. He told me, that he had fasted two days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry but once. They who beheld with wonder how much he eat upon all occasions, when his dinner was to his taste, could not easily conceive what he must have meant by hunger; and not only was he remarkable for the extraordinary quantity which he eat, but he was, or affected to be, a man of very nice discernment in the science of cookery. He used to descant critically on the dishes which had been at table where he had dined or supped, and to recollect very minutely what he had liked. I remember when he was in Scotland, his praising *"Gordon's palates,"* (a

dish of palates at the Honorable Alexander Gordon's) with a warmth of expression which might have done honor to more important subjects. "As for Maclaurin's imitation of a *made dish*, it was a wretched attempt." He about the same time was so much displeased with the performances of a nobleman's French cook, that he exclaimed with vehemence, "I'd throw such a rascal into the river;" and he then proceeded to alarm a lady at whose house he was to sup, by the following manifesto of his skill: "I, Madam, who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery, than any person who has a very tolerable cook, but lives much at home; for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook: whereas, Madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." When invited to dine, even with an intimate friend, he was not pleased if something better than a plain dinner was not prepared for him. I have heard him say on such an occasion, "This was a good dinner enough, to be sure: but it was not a dinner to *ask* a man to." On the other hand, he was wont to express, with great glee, his satisfaction when he had been entertained quite to his mind. One day when we had dined with his neighbor and landlord, in Bolt-court, Mr. Allen, the printer, whose old housekeeper had studied his taste in everything, he pronounced this eulogy: "Sir, we could not have had a better dinner, had there been a *Synod of Cooks*."

[1764] Soon after his return to London, which was in February, was founded that CLUB which existed long without a name, but at Mr. Garrick's funeral became distinguished by the title of THE LITERARY CLUB. Sir Joshua Reynolds had the merit of being the first proposer of it, to which Johnson acceded; and the original members were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Edmund Burke, Dr. Nugent, Mr. Beauclerk, Mr. Langton, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Chamier, and Sir John Hawkins. They met at the Turk's Head, in Gerrard-street, Soho, one evening in every week, at seven, and generally continued their conversation till a pretty late hour. This club has been gradually increased to its present number, thirty-five. After about ten years, instead of supping weekly, it was resolved to dine together once a fortnight during the meeting of Parliament. Their original tavern having been converted into a private house, they moved first to Prince's in Sackville-street, then to Le Telier's in Dover-street, and now meet at Parsloe's, St. James's-street.

About this time he was afflicted with a very severe return of the hypochondriac disorder, which was ever lurking about him. He was so ill, as, notwithstanding his remarkable love of company, to be entirely averse to society, the most fatal symptom of that malady. Dr. Adams told me, that, as an old friend he was admitted to visit him, and that he found him in a deplorable state, sighing, groaning, talking to himself, and restlessly walking from room to room. He then used this emphatical expression of the misery which he felt: "I would consent to have a limb amputated to recover my spirits."

Talking to himself was, indeed, one of his singularities ever since I knew him. I was certain that he was frequently uttering pious ejaculations; for fragments of the Lord's Prayer have been distinctly overheard. His friend Mr. Thomas Davies, of whom Churchill says,

"That Davies hath a very pretty wife,"

when Dr. Johnson muttered—"lead us not into temptation," used with waggish and gallant humor to whisper Mrs. Davies, "You, my dear, are the cause of this."

He had another particularity, of which

none of his friends even ventured to ask an explanation. It appeared to me some superstitious habit, which he had contracted early, and from which he had never called upon his reason to disentangle him. This was his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so as that either his right or his left foot, (I am not certain which,) should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Thus I conjecture: for I have, upon innumerable occasions, observed him suddenly stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected or gone wrong in this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and, having gone through it, break from his abstraction, walk briskly on, and join his companion. A strange instance of something of this nature, even when on horseback, happened when he was in the Isle of Sky. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed him to go a good way about, rather than cross a particular alley in Leicester-fields; but this Sir Joshua imputed to his having had some disagreeable recollection associated with it.

That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appearance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention, that while talking or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth; sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving a half whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly under his breath, *too, too, too:* all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile. Generally when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he used to blow out his breath like a whale. This I suppose was a relief to his lungs; and seemed in him to be a contemptuous mode of expression, as if he had made the arguments of his opponent fly like chaff before the wind.

I am fully aware how very obvious an occasion I here give for the sneering jocularity of such as have no relish of an exact likeness; which to render complete, he who draws it must not disdain the slightest strokes. But if witlings should be inclined to attack this account, let them have the candor to quote what I have offered in my defence.

[1765] This year was distinguished by his being introduced into the family of Mr. Thrale, one of the most eminent brewers in England, and member of Parliament for the borough of Southwark. Foreigners are not a little amazed, when they hear of brewers, distillers, and men in similar departments of trade, held forth as persons of considerable consequence. In this great commercial country it is natural that a situation which produces much wealth should be considered as very respectable; and, no doubt, honest industry is entitled to esteem. But, perhaps, the too rapid advance of men of low extraction tends to lessen the value of that distinction by birth and gentility, which has ever been found beneficial to the grand scheme of subordination. Johnson used to give this account of the rise of Mr. Thrale's father: "He worked

at six shillings a week for twenty years in the great brewery, which afterwards was his own. The proprietor of it had an only daughter, who was married to a nobleman. It was not fit that a peer should continue the business. On the old man's death, therefore, the brewery was to be sold. To find a purchaser for so large a property was a difficult matter; and, after some time, it was suggested, that it would be advisable to treat with Thrale, a sensible, active, honest man, who had been employed in the house, and to transfer the whole to him for thirty thousand pounds, security being taken upon the property. This was accordingly settled. In eleven years Thrale paid the purchase-money. He acquired a large fortune, and lived to be a member of Parliament for Southwark. But what was most remarkable was the liberality with which he used his riches. He gave his son and daughters the best education. The esteem which his good conduct procured him from the nobleman who had married his master's daughter, made him be treated with much attention; and his son, both at school and at the University of Oxford, associated with young men of the first rank. His allowance from his father, after he left college, was splendid; not less than a thousand a year. This, in a man who had risen as old Thrale did, was a very extraordinary instance of generosity. He used to say, 'If this young dog does not find so much after I am gone as he expects, let him remember that he has had a great deal in my own time.' "

The son, though in affluent circumstances, had good sense enough to carry on his father's trade, which was of such extent, that I remember he once told me, he would not quit it for an annuity of ten thousand a year; "Not (said he,) that I get ten thousand a year by it, but it is an estate to a family." Having left daughters only, the property was sold for the immense sum of one hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds; a magnificent proof of what may be done by fair trade in no long period of time.

Mr. Thrale had married Miss Hester Lynch Salisbury, of good Welsh extraction, a lady of lively talents, improved by education. That Johnson's introduction into Mr. Thrale's family, which contributed so much to the happiness of his life, was owing to her desire for his conversation, is a very probable and a general supposition: but it is not the truth. Mr. Murphy, who was intimate with Mr. Thrale, having spoken very highly of Dr. Johnson, he was requested to make them acquainted. This being mentioned to Johnson, he accepted of an invitation to dinner at Thrale's, and was so much pleased with his reception, both by Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and they so much pleased with him, that his invitations to their house were more and more frequent, till at last he became one of the family, and an apartment was appropriated to him, both in their house at Southwark and in their villa at Streatham.

Johnson had a very sincere esteem for Mr. Thrale, as a man of excellent principles, a good scholar, well skilled in trade, of a sound understanding, and of manners such as presented the character of a plain independent English 'Squire. As this family will frequently be mentioned in the course of the following pages, and as a false notion has prevailed that Mr. Thrale was inferior, and in some degree insignificant, compared with Mrs. Thrale, it may be proper to give a true state of the case from the authority of Johnson himself in his own words.

"I know no man, (said he,) who is more master of his wife and family than Thrale. If he but holds up a finger, he

is obeyed. It is a great mistake to suppose that she is above him in literary attainments. She is more flippant; but he has ten times her learning: he is a regular scholar; but her learning is that of a school-boy in one of the lower forms." My readers may naturally wish for some representation of the figures of this couple. Mr. Thrale was tall, well proportioned, and stately. As for *Madam,* or *my Mistress,* by which epithets Johnson used to mention Mrs. Thrale, she was short, plump, and brisk. She has herself given us a lively view of the idea which Johnson had of her person, on her appearing before him in a dark-colored gown: "You little creatures should never wear those sort of clothes, however; they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colors?" Mr. Thrale gave his wife a liberal indulgence, both in the choice of their company, and in the mode of entertaining them. He understood and valued Johnson, without remission, from their first acquaintance to the day of his death. Mrs. Thrale was enchanted with Johnson's conversation for its own sake, and had also a very allowable vanity in appearing to be honored with the attention of so celebrated a man.

Nothing could be more fortunate for Johnson than this connection. He had at Mr. Thrale's all the comforts and even luxuries of life: his melancholy was diverted, and his irregular habits lessened by association with an agreeable and well-ordered family. He was treated with the utmost respect, and even affection. The vivacity of Mrs. Thrale's literary talk roused him to cheerfulness and exertion, even when they were alone. But this was not often the case; for he found here a constant succession of what gave him the highest enjoyment, the society of the learned, the witty, and the eminent in every way; who were assembled in numerous companies; called forth his wonderful powers, and gratified him with admiration, to which no man could be insensible.

In the October of this year he at length gave to the world his edition of *Shakespeare,* which, if it had no other merit but that of producing his Preface, in which the excellencies and defects of that immortal bard are displayed with a masterly hand, the nation would have had no reason to complain. A blind indiscriminate admiration of Shakespeare had exposed the British nation to the ridicule of foreigners. Johnson, by candidly admitting the faults of his poet, had the more credit in bestowing on him deserved and indisputable praise; and doubtless none of all his panegyrists have done him half so much honor. Their praise was like that of a counsel, upon his own side of the cause; Johnson's was like the grave, well considered, and impartial opinion of the judge, which falls from his lips with weight, and is received with reverence. What he did as a commentator has no small share of merit, though his researches were not so ample, and his investigations so acute as they might have been; which we now certainly know from the labors of other able and ingenious critics who have followed him. He has enriched his edition with a concise account of each play, and of its characteristic excellence. Many of his notes have illustrated obscurities in the text, and placed passages eminent for beauty in a more conspicuous light; and he has, in general, exhibited such a mode of annotation, as may be beneficial to all subsequent editors.

[1769] I know not how so whimsical a thought came into my mind, but I asked, "If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a newborn child with you, what would you do?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I should not much like my company."

BOSWELL. "But would you take the trouble of rearing it?" He seemed, as may well be supposed, unwilling to pursue the subject: but upon my persevering in my question, replied, "Why yes, Sir, I would; but I must have all conveniences. If I had no garden, I would make a shed on the roof, and take it there for fresh air. I should feed it, and wash it much, and with warm water to please it, not with cold water to give it pain." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, does not heat relax." JOHNSON. "Sir, you are not to imagine the water is to be very hot. I would not *coddle* the child. No, Sir, the hardy method of treating children does no good. I'll take you five children from London, who shall cuff five Highland children. Sir, a man bred in London will carry a burthen, or run, or wrestle, as well as a man brought up in the hardiest manner in the country." BOSWELL. "Good living, I suppose, makes the Londoners strong." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I don't know that it does. Our chairmen from Ireland, who are as strong men as any, have been brought up upon potatoes. Quantity makes up for quality." BOSWELL. "Would you teach this child that I have furnished you with, anything?" JOHNSON. "No, I should not be apt to teach it." BOSWELL. "Would not you have a pleasure in teaching it." JOHNSON. "No, Sir, I should *not* have a pleasure in teaching it." BOSWELL. "Have you not a pleasure in teaching men!—*There* I have you. You have the same pleasure in teaching men, that I should have in teaching children." JOHNSON. "Why, something about that."

[1770] During this year there was a total cessation of all correspondence between Dr. Johnson and me, without any coldness on either side, but merely from procrastination, continued from day to day; and as I was not in London, I had no opportunity of enjoying his company and recording his conversation. To supply this blank, I shall present my readers with some *Collectanea*, obligingly furnished to me by the Rev. Dr. Maxwell, of Falkland, in Ireland, some time assistant preacher at the Temple, and for many years the social friend of Johnson, who spoke of him with a very kind regard.

"His general mode of life, during my acquaintance, seemed to be pretty uniform. About twelve o'clock I commonly visited him, and frequently found him in bed, or declaiming over his tea, which he drank very plentifully. He generally had a levee of morning visitors, chiefly men of letters: Hawkesworth, Goldsmith, Murphy, Langton, Steevens, Beauclerk, etc., etc. and sometimes learned ladies; particularly I remember a French lady of wit and fashion doing him the honor of a visit. He seemed to me to be considered as a kind of public oracle, whom everybody thought they had a right to visit and consult; and doubtless they were well rewarded. I never could discover how he found time for his compositions. He declaimed all the morning, then went to dinner at a tavern, where he commonly stayed late, and then drank his tea at some friend's house, over which he loitered a great while, but seldom took supper. I fancy he must have read and wrote chiefly in the night, for I can scarcely recollect that he ever refused going with me to a tavern, and he often went to Ranelagh, which he deemed a place of innocent recreation.

"He frequently gave all the silver in his pocket to the poor, who watched him, between his house and the tavern where he dined. He walked the streets at all hours, and said he was never robbed, for the rogues knew he had little money, nor had the appearance of having much.

"Though the most accessible and communicative man alive, yet when he sus-

pected he was invited to be exhibited, he constantly spurned the invitation.

"Two young women from Staffordshire visited him when I was present, to consult him on the subject of Methodism, to which they were inclined. 'Come (said he) you pretty fools, dine with Maxwell and me at the Mitre, and we will talk over that subject;' which they did, and after dinner he took one of them upon his knee, and fondled her for half an hour together.

"Upon a visit to me at a country lodging near Twickenham, he asked what sort of society I had there. I told him, but indifferent; as they chiefly consisted of opulent traders, retired from business. He said he never much liked that class of people; 'For, Sir, (said he) they have lost the civility of tradesmen, without acquiring the manners of gentlemen.'

"Johnson was much attached to London: he observed, that a man stored his mind better there than anywhere else; and that in remote situations a man's body might be feasted, but his mind was starved, and his faculties apt to degenerate, from want of exercise and competition. No place, (he said) cured a man's vanity or arrogance, so well as London; for as no man was either great or good *per se*, but as compared with others not so good or great, he was sure to find in the metropolis many his equals, and some his superiors. He observed, that a man in London was in less danger of falling in love indiscreetly, than anywhere else; for there the difficulty of deciding between the conflicting pretensions of a vast variety of objects, kept him safe. He told me that he had frequently been offered country preferment, if he would consent to take orders; but he could not leave the improved society of the capital, or consent to exchange the exhilarating joys and splendid decorations of public life, for the obscurity, insipidity, and uniformity of remote situations.

"A gentleman who had been very unhappy in marriage, married immediately after his wife died: Johnson said, it was the triumph of hope over experience.

"He observed that a man of sense and education should meet a suitable companion in a wife. It was a miserable thing when the conversation could only be such as, whether the mutton should be boiled or roasted, and probably a dispute about that.

"He did not approve of late marriages, observing that more was lost in point of time, than compensated for by any possible advantages. Even ill assorted marriages were preferable to cheerless celibacy.

[1780] "Talking of the Farce of *High Life below Stairs*,[1] he said, 'Here is a Farce, which is really very diverting, when you see it acted; and yet one may read it, and not know that one has been reading anything at all.'

"He used at one time to go occasionally to the green-room of Drury-lane Theater, where he was much regarded by the players, and was very easy and facetious with them. He had a very high opinion of Mrs. Clive's comic powers, and conversed more with her than with any of them. He said, 'Clive, Sir, is a good thing to sit by; she always understands what you say.' And she said of him, 'I love to sit by Dr. Johnson: he always entertains me.' One night, when *The Recruiting Officer* was acted, he said to Mr. Holland, who had been expressing an apprehension that Dr. Johnson would disdain the works of Farquhar; 'No, Sir, I think Farquhar a man whose writings have considerable merit.'

"His friend Garrick was so busy in conducting the drama, that they could

[1] Written by James Townley (1714-1778) and first produced in 1759.

not have so much intercourse as Mr. Garrick used to profess an anxious wish that there should be. There might, indeed, be something in the contemptuous severity as to the merit of acting, which his old preceptor nourished in himself, that would mortify Garrick after the great applause which he received from the audience. For though Johnson said of him, 'Sir, a man who has a nation to admire him every night, may well be expected to be somewhat elated;' yet he would treat theatrical matters with a ludicrous slight. He mentioned one evening, 'I met David coming off the stage, dressed in a woman's riding hood, when he acted in *The Wonder;* I came full upon him, and I believe he was not pleased.' "

[1782] The following letters require no extracts from mine to introduce them:

"To James Boswell, Esq.

"DEAR SIR,

"The earnestness and tenderness of your letter is such, that I cannot think myself showing it more respect than it claims, by sitting down to answer it the day on which I received it.

"This year has afflicted me with a very irksome and severe disorder. My respiration has been much impeded, and much blood has been taken away. I am now harassed by a catarrhous cough, from which my purpose is to seek relief by change of air; and I am, therefore, preparing to go to Oxford.

"Whether I did right in dissuading you from coming to London this spring, I will not determine. You have not lost much by missing my company; I have scarcely been well for a single week. I might have received comfort from your kindness; but you would have seen me afflicted, and, perhaps, found me peevish. Whatever might have been your pleasure or mine, I know not how I could have honestly advised you to come hither with borrowed money. Do not accustom yourself to consider debt only as an inconvenience; you will find it a calamity. Poverty takes away so many means of doing good, and produces so much inability to resist evil, both natural and moral, that it is by all virtuous means to be avoided. Consider a man whose fortune is very narrow; whatever be his rank by birth, or whatever his reputation by intellectual excellence, what can he do? or what evil can he prevent? That he cannot help the needy is evident; he has nothing to spare. But, perhaps, his advice or admonition may be useful. His poverty will destroy his influence: many more can find that he is poor, than that he is wise; and few will reverence the understanding that is of so little advantage to its owner. I say nothing of the personal wretchedness of the debtor, which, however, has passed into a proverb. Of riches it is not necessary to write the praise. Let it, however, be remembered, that he who has money to spare, has it always in his power to benefit others; and of such power a good man must always be desirous.

"I am pleased with your account of Easter. We shall meet, I hope in Autumn, both well and both cheerful; and part each the better for the other's company.

"Make my compliments to Mrs. Boswell, and to the young charmers.

"I am, &c.

"Sam Johnson."

"London, June 3, 1782."

[1784] My readers are now, at last, to behold Samuel Johnson preparing himself for that doom, from which the most exalted powers afford no exemption to man. Death had always been to him an object of terror; so that though by no means happy, he still clung to life with an eagerness at which many have wondered. At any time when he was ill, he

was very pleased to be told that he looked better. An ingenious member of the *Eumelian Club* informs me, that upon one occasion, when he said to him that he saw health returning to his cheek, Johnson seized him by the hand and exclaimed, "Sir, you are one of the kindest friends I ever had."

The consideration of numerous papers of which he was possessed, seems to have struck Johnson's mind, with a sudden anxiety, and as they were in great confusion, it is much to be lamented that he had not entrusted some faithful and discreet person with the care and selection of them; instead of which, he, in a precipitate manner, burnt large masses of them, with little regard, as I apprehend, to discrimination. Not that I suppose we have thus been deprived of any compositions which he had ever intended for the public eye; but from what escaped the flames, I judge that many curious circumstances relating both to himself and other literary characters, have perished.

Two very valuable articles, I am sure we have lost, which were two quarto volumes, containing a full, fair, and most particular account of his own life, from his earliest recollection. I owned to him, that having accidentally seen them, I had read a great deal in them; and apologizing for the liberty I had taken, asked him if I could help it. He placidly answered, "Why, Sir, I do not think you could have helped it." I said that I had, for once in my life, felt half an inclination to commit theft. It had come into my mind to carry off those two volumes, and never see him more. Upon my enquiring how this would have affected him, "Sir, (said he,) I believe I should have gone mad."

Amidst the melancholy clouds which hung over the dying Johnson, his characteristical manner showed itself on different occasions.

When Dr. Warren in the usual style, hoped that he was better; his answer was, "No, Sir; you cannot conceive with what acceleration I advance towards death."

A man whom he had never seen before was employed one night to sit up with him. Being asked next morning how he liked his attendant, his answer was, "Not at all, Sir: the fellow's an idiot; he is as awkward as a turn-spit when first put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse."

Mr. Windham having placed a pillow conveniently to support him, he thanked him for his kindness, and said, "That will do,—all that a pillow can do."

Johnson, with that native fortitude, which, amidst all his bodily distress, and mental sufferings, never forsook him, asked Dr. Brocklesby, as a man in whom he had confidence, to tell him plainly whether he could recover. "Give me (said he) a direct answer." The Doctor having first asked him if he could bear the whole truth, which way soever it might lead, and being answered that he could, declared that, in his opinion, he could not recover without a miracle. "Then, (said Johnson,) I will take no more physic, not even my opiates: for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded." In this resolution he persevered, and, at the same time, used only the weakest kinds of sustenance.

Dr. Brocklesby, who will not be suspected of fanaticism, obliged me with the following accounts:

"For some time before his death, all his fears were calmed and absorbed by the prevalence of his faith, and his trust in the merits and *propitiation* of JESUS CHRIST."

Johnson having thus in his mind the true Christian scheme, at once rational and consolatory, uniting justice and mercy in the DIVINITY, with the improvement of human nature, previous to his receiving the Holy Sacrament in his apartment,

composed and fervently uttered his prayer:

"Almighty and most merciful Father, I am now as to human eyes, it seems, about to commemorate, for the last time, the death of thy Son JESUS CHRIST, our Saviour and Redeemer. Grant, O LORD, that my whole hope and confidence may be in his merits, and thy mercy; enforce and accept my imperfect repentance; make this commemoration available to the confirmation of my faith, the establishment of my hope, and the enlargement of my charity; and make the death of thy Son JESUS CHRIST effectual to my redemption. Have mercy upon me, and pardon the multitude of my offences. Bless my friends; have mercy upon all men. Support me, by thy Holy Spirit, in the days of weakness, and at the hour of death; and receive me, at my death, to everlasting happiness, for the sake of JESUS CHRIST. Amen."

Having, as has been already mentioned, made his will on the 8th and 9th of December, and settled all his worldly affairs, he languished till Monday, the 13th of that month, when he expired, about seven o'clock in the evening, with so little apparent pain that his attendants hardly perceived when his dissolution took place.

Such was SAMUEL JOHNSON, a man whose talents, acquirements, and virtues were so extraordinary, that the more his character is considered, the more he will be regarded by the present age, and by posterity, with admiration and reverence.

COMEDY OF MANNERS: SHERIDAN'S THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

To understand the nature of the drama in the eighteenth century one must bear in mind that it depended for its existence upon the patronage of the *beau monde* of London. There were but two or three theaters in the city and members of the fashionable set could not only be sure of finding each other at the performance of a popular play but were also expected to be ready to discuss it when they met at dinner or in the drawing room. The dramatist, ambitious for success, was thus under the compulsion of suiting the tastes and prejudices of a social group in an age when strict conformity to the social code was conspicuously an element in good breeding. This code demanded in its plays the suppression of natural emotions, the limitation of dramatic situations to the experiences of the boudoir and drawing room, and the presentation of characters wno were not uncouth or socially unacceptable. A pattern, once adopted, would not be changed radically, so that the dramatist tended to exercise his ingenuity in giving novel versions of more or less stereotyped themes and familiar types of characters. For this reason the comedy of manners in the eighteenth century is frequently referred to as artificial comedy.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan had already one success behind him, *The Rivals* (1775), and some less significant plays and adaptations when he produced *The School for Scandal* in 1777. He had an aptitude for dramatic construction and a wit that was later to distinguish him as an orator during his career in Parliament. These, with ability to use the old forms in a new way, brought him fame as a playwright.

The School for Scandal has as its object the ridiculing of a social vice through satire. The important characters are types well known to the theater goer of that day, each representing some weakness or virtue. Sheridan showed skill, however, in making the incidents of his well developed plot come about as the results of the characters' being what they were. They talk with a brilliancy that is more of the theater than of actual life, perhaps, but in the time of Chesterfield clever conversation was a genuine social ideal. The comedy has value now in picturing entertainingly certain phases of the life of a picturesque period and, in its exposure of the vice of scandal-bearing, has also that touch of universality that is independent of time and place.

RICHARD BRINSLEY SHERIDAN (1751–1816)

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

A PORTRAIT

ADDRESSED TO MRS. CREWE,[1]

WITH THE COMEDY OF THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

Tell me, ye prim adepts in Scandal's school,
Who rail by precept, and detract by rule,
Lives there no character, so tried, so known,
So decked with grace, and so unlike your own,
That even you assist her fame to raise,
Approve by envy, and by silence praise!
Attend!—a model shall attract your view—
Daughters of calumny, I summon you!
You shall decide if this a portrait prove,
Or fond creation of the Muse and Love.
Attend, ye virgin critics, shrewd and sage,
Ye matron censors of this childish age,
Whose peering eye and wrinkled front declare
A fixed antipathy to young and fair;
By cunning, cautious; or by nature, cold,
In maiden madness, virulently bold!—
Attend, ye skilled to coin the precious tale,
Creating proof, where innuendos fail!
Whose practised memories, cruelly exact,
Omit no circumstance, except the fact!—
Attend, all ye who boast,—or old or young,—
The living libel of a slanderous tongue!
So shall my theme as far contrasted be,
As saints by fiends, or hymns by calumny.

Come, gentle Amoret[2] (for 'neath that name
In worthier verse is sung thy beauty's fame);
Come—for but thee who seeks the Muse? and while
Celestial blushes check thy conscious smile,
With timid grace, and hesitating eye,
The perfect model, which I boast, supply:—
Vain Muse! couldst thou the humblest sketch create
Of her, or slightest charm couldst imitate—
Could thy blest strain in kindred colors trace
The faintest wonder of her form and face—
Poets would study the immortal line,
And Reynolds[3] own his art subdued by thine;
That art, which well might added luster give
To Nature's best, and Heaven's superlative:
On Granby's[4] cheek might bid new glories rise,
Or point a purer beam from Devon's[5] eyes!
Hard is the task to shape that beauty's praise,
Whose judgment scorns the homage flattery pays!
But praising Amoret we cannot err,
No tongue o'ervalues Heaven, or flatters her!
Yet she by Fate's perverseness—she alone
Would doubt our truth, nor deem such praise her own.
Adorning fashion, unadorned by dress,
Simple from taste, and not from carelessness;

[1] Mrs. John Crewe, a famous beauty of the time, and a friend of the Sheridans.

[2] A character from *The Faerie Queene*, representing female beauty.

[3] Sir Joshua Reynolds, famous portrait painter.

[4] Lady Mary Isabelle, wife of Marquis of Granby.

[5] The Duchess of Devonshire.

Discreet in gesture, in deportment mild,
Not stiff with prudence, nor uncouthly wild:
No state has Amoret; no studied mien;
She frowns no goddess, and she moves no queen.
The softer charm that in her manner lies
Is framed to captivate, yet not surprise;
It justly suits th' expression of her face,—
'Tis less than dignity, and more than grace!
On her pure cheek the native hue is such,
That, formed by Heaven to be admired so much,
The hand divine, with a less partial care,
Might well have fixed a fainter crimson there,
And bade the gentle inmate of her breast—
Inshrinèd Modesty—supply the rest.
But who the peril of her lips shall paint?
Strip them of smiles—still, still all words are faint.
But moving Love himself appears to teach
Their action, though denied to rule her speech;
And thou who seest her speak, and dost not hear,
Mourn not her distant accents 'scape thine ear;
Viewing those lips, thou still may'st make pretence
To judge of what she says, and swear 'tis sense:
Clothed with such grace, with such expression fraught,
They move in meaning, and they pause in thought!
But dost thou farther watch, with charmed surprise,
The mild irresolution of her eyes,
Curious to mark how frequent they repose,
In brief eclipse and momentary close—
Ah! seest thou not an ambushed Cupid there,
Too tim'rous of his charge, with jealous care
Veils and unveils those beams of heav'nly light,
Too full, too fatal else, for mortal sight?
Nor yet, such pleasing vengeance fond to meet,
In pardoning dimples hope a safe retreat.
What though her peaceful breast should ne'er allow
Subduing frowns to arm her altered brow,
By Love, I swear, and by his gentle wiles,
More fatal still the mercy of her smiles!
Thus lovely, thus adorn'd, possessing all
Of bright or fair that can to woman fall,
The height of vanity might well be thought
Prerogative in her, and Nature's fault.
Yet gentle Amoret, in mind supreme
As well as charms, rejects the vainer theme;
And, half mistrustful of her beauty's store,
She barbs with wit those darts too keen before:—
Read in all knowledge that her sex should reach,
Though Greville,[1] or the Muse, should deign to teach,
Fond to improve, nor tim'rous to discern
How far it is a woman's grace to learn;
In Millar's [2] dialect she would not prove
Apollo's priestess, but Apollo's love,
Graced by those signs which truth delights to own,
The timid blush, and mild submitted tone:
Whate'er she says, though sense appear throughout,
Displays the tender hue of female doubt;
Decked with that charm, how lovely wit appears,
How graceful science, when that robe she wears!

[1] Mrs. Greville, mother of Mrs. Crewe.
[2] Mrs. Millar, a hostess at Bath.

Such too her talents, and her bent of mind,
As speak a sprightly heart by thought refined,
A taste for mirth, by contemplation schooled,
A turn for ridicule, by candor ruled,
A scorn of folly, which she tries to hide;
An awe of talent, which she owns with pride!
Peace, idle Muse! no more thy strain prolong,
But yield a theme, thy warmest praises wrong;
Just to her merit, though thou canst not raise
Thy feeble verse, behold th' acknowledged praise
Has spread conviction through the envious train,
And cast a fatal gloom o'er Scandal's reign!
And lo! each pallid hag, with blistered tongue,
Mutters assent to all thy zeal has sung—
Owns all the colors just—the outline true;
Thee my inspirer, and my model—CREWE!

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY MR. GARRICK [1]

A SCHOOL for Scandal! tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now, the knowing think;
We might as well be taught to eat and drink.
Caused by a dearth of scandal, should the vapors [2]
Distress our fair ones—let them read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit;
Crave what you will—there's *quantum sufficit*.[3]
"Lord!" cries my Lady Wormwood (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle),
Just risen at noon, all night at cards when threshing
Strong tea and scandal—"Bless me, how refreshing!
Give me the papers, Lisp—how bold and free! (*Sips*)
Last night Lord L. (*Sips*) *was caught with Lady D.*
For aching heads what charming sal volatile! (*Sips*)
If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,
We hope she'll DRAW, *or we'll* UNDRAW *the curtain.*
Fine satire, poz [4]—in public all abuse it,
But, by ourselves (*Sips*), our praise we can't refuse it.
Now, Lisp, read you—there, at that dash and star:"
"Yes, ma'am—*A certain lord had best beware,*
Who lives not twenty miles from Grosvenor Square; [5]
For, should he Lady W. find willing,
Wormwood is bitter"——"Oh! that's me! the villain!
Throw it behind the fire, and never more
Let that vile paper come within my door."
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart;
To reach our feelings, we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young, to think that he
Can stop the full spring-tide of calumny?

[1] David Garrick, the celebrated English actor.
[2] blues
[3] as much as is sufficient
[4] positively
[5] A fashionable residential section of London.

Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner raised than laid.
So strong, so swift, the monster there's no gagging:
Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestowed,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road:
To show his gratitude he draws his pen,
And seeks this hydra, Scandal, in his den.
For your applause all perils he would through—
He'll fight—that's write—a cavalliero true,
Till every drop of blood—that's ink—is spilt for you.

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

AS ORIGINALLY ACTED AT DRURY-LANE THEATER MAY 8, 1777

SIR PETER TEAZLE ..... *Mr. King.*
SIR OLIVER SURFACE ..... *Mr. Yates.*
SIR HARRY BUMPER ..... *Mr. Gawdry.*
SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE .... *Mr. Dodd.*
JOSEPH SURFACE ..... *Mr. Palmer.*
CHARLES SURFACE ..... *Mr. Smith.*
CARELESS ..... *Mr. Farren.*
SNAKE ..... *Mr. Packer.*
CRABTREE ..... *Mr. Parsons.*
ROWLEY ..... *Mr. Aickin.*
MOSES ..... *Mr. Baddeley.*
TRIP ..... *Mr. Lamash.*
LADY TEAZLE ..... *Mrs. Abington.*
LADY SNEERWELL ..... *Miss Sherry.*
MRS. CANDOUR ..... *Miss Pope.*
MARIA ..... *Miss P. Hopkins.*

Gentlemen, Maid, and Servants

SCENE: *London*

ACT I

SCENE I: *Lady Sneerwell's House*

(*Discovered* LADY SNEERWELL *at the dressing-table;* SNAKE *drinking chocolate*)

Lady Sneer. The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

Snake. They were, madam; and, as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackitt's ears within four-and-twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneer. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackitt has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge, she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, and as many close confinements; nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the Town and Country Magazine,[1] when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneer. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true. She generally designs well, has a free tongue and a bold invention; but her coloring is too dark, and her outlines often extravagant. She

[1] A series of sketches of fashionable intrigues, appearing monthly.

wants that delicacy of tint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least; everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneer. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of—the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship's, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a city knight, with a good jointure, should not close with [1] the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneer. Then, at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady Sneer. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but, finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneer. How dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess that Charles—that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation—that he it is for whom I am thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice everything?

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent: but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneer. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave; while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a youthful miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England; and, above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneer. True; and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria; while poor Charles has no friend in the house—though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

[1] make terms with

(*Enter* SERVANT)

Ser. Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneer. Show him up. (*Exit* SERVANT)

(*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE)

Jos. Surf. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

Lady Sneer. Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment, but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us; and, believe me, the confidence is not ill-placed.

Jos. Surf. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria—or, what is more material to me, your brother.

Jos. Surf. I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneer. Ah, my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you. But do your brother's distresses increase?

Jos. Surf. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution [1] in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

Lady Sneer. Poor Charles!

Jos. Surf. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one can't help feeling for him. Poor Charles! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves——

Lady Sneer. O Lud! [2] you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

[1] sheriff's sale [2] Lord

Jos. Surf. Egad, that's true! I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter. However, it certainly is a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine, who if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming: I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you. Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

Jos. Surf. Sir, your very devoted.—(*Exit* SNAKE) Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any further confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneer. Why so?

Jos. Surf. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Jos. Surf. Nothing more likely: take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy. Ah, Maria!

(*Enter* MARIA)

Lady Sneer. Maria, my dear, how do you do? What's the matter?

Mar. Oh! there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipped out, and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneer. Is that all?

Jos. Surf. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would not have been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneer. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here. But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you should avoid him so?

Mar. Oh, he has done nothing—but 'tis for what he has said: his conversation

is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Jos. Surf. Ay, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him; for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend: and his uncle's as bad.

Lady Sneer. Nay, but we should make allowance; Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Mar. For my part, I confess, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice. What do you think, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady Sneer. Pshaw! there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick. What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. To be sure, madam; that conversation, where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Mar. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalship, and a thousand motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

(*Enter* SERVANT)

Ser. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and, if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneer. Beg her to walk in.—(*Exit* SERVANT) Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for, though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

Mar. Yes, with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Jos. Surf. I' faith that's true, Lady Sneerwell: whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneer. Hush!—here she is!

(*Enter* MRS. CANDOUR)

Mrs. Can. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century?—Mr. Surface, what news do you hear?—though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Jos. Surf. Just so, indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Oh, Maria! child,—what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles? His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Mar. I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

Mrs. Can. True, true, child: but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

Mar. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Can. Very true, child: but what's to be done? People will talk—there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt. But, Lord! there's no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

Mar. Such reports are highly scandalous.

Mrs. Can. So they are, child—shameful, shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes. Lord, now who would have suspected your friend,

Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill nature of people, that they say her uncle stopped her last week, just as she was stepping into the York diligence with her dancing-master.

Mar. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for that report.

Mrs. Can. Ah, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino—though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

Jos. Surf. The license of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

Mar. 'Tis so; but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

Mrs. Can. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one: but what's to be done, as I said before? how will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackitt assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time, Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Sir H. Bouquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation. But, Lord, do you think I would report these things? No, no! tale-bearers, as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

Jos. Surf. Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good nature!

Mrs. Can. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best. By the by, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined?

Jos. Surf. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. Ah! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; everybody almost is in the same way: Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit—all up, I hear, within this week; so, if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

Jos. Surf. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

(*Enter* SERVANT)

Ser. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. (*Exit* SERVANT)

Lady Sneer. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you; positively you sha'n't escape.

(*Enter* CRABTREE *and* SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE)

Crab. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand. Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad, ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too. Isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

Sir Ben. Oh, fie, uncle!

Crab. Nay, egad it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymer in the kingdom. Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione.[1] Come now; your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and——

Sir Ben. Uncle, now—pr'ithee——

Crab. I' faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise

[1] A meeting for conversation on literature or art.

you to hear how ready he is at all these fine sort of things.

Lady Sneer. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

Sir Ben. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public. (*Pointing to* MARIA)

Crab. (*To* MARIA) 'Fore heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you!—you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura,[1] or Waller's Sacharissa.[2]

Sir Ben. (*To* MARIA) Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall meander through a meadow of margin. 'Fore Gad they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

Crab. But, ladies, that's true—have you heard the news?

Mrs. Can. What, sir, do you mean the report of——

Crab. No, ma'am, that's not it.—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Can. Impossible!

Crab. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Ben. 'Tis very true, ma'am: everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crab. Yes—and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneer. Why, I have heard something of this before.

Mrs. Can. It can't be—and I wonder any one should believe such a story of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir Ben. O Lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Can. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

Sir Ben. True, madam, there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution, who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Can. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crab. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am.—Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge?—Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Ben. Oh, to be sure!—the most whimsical circumstance.

Lady Sneer. How was it, pray?

Crab. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, 'I have known instances of it—for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins.'—'What!' cries the Lady Dowager Dundizzy (who you know is as deaf as a post), 'has Miss Piper had twins?'—This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughter. However, 'twas the next morning everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl;

[1] The lady to whom Petrarch wrote many sonnets.

[2] Lady Dorothy Sydney

and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farmhouse where the babies were put to nurse.

Lady Sneer. Strange, indeed!

Crab. Matter of fact, I assure you.—O Lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

Jos. Surf. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crab. He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe? Sad comfort, whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

Jos. Surf. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him. He may reform.

Sir Ben. To be sure he may: for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and, though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

Crab. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry[1] was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman: no man more popular there, 'fore Gad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine;[2] and that, whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

Sir Ben. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Jos. Surf. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

[1] A London street which was a resort of the Jews (the money-lenders).

[2] A system of life insurance.

Mar. (*Aside*) Their malice is intolerable!—(*Aloud*) Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning: I'm not very well.

(*Exit* MARIA)

Mrs. Can. O dear! she changes color very much.

Lady Sneer. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her: she may want assistance.

Mrs. Can. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am.—Poor dear girl, who knows what her situation may be!

(*Exit* MRS. CANDOUR)

Lady Sneer. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Ben. The young lady's *penchant* is obvious.

Crab. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that: follow her, and put her into good humor. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

Sir Ben. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

Crab. O Lud, ay! undone as ever man was—can't raise a guinea!

Sir Ben. And everything sold, I'm told, that was movable.

Crab. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscots.

Sir Ben. And I'm very sorry also to hear some bad stories against him.

(*Going*)

Crab. Oh, he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Ben. But, however, as he's your brother——

(*Going*)

Crab. We'll tell you all another opportunity.

(*Exeunt* CRABTREE *and* SIR BENJAMIN)

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Jos. Surf. And I believe the abuse was no more acceptable to your ladyship than Maria.

Lady Sneer. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther; in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiment.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE II: *Sir Peter's House*

(*Enter* SIR PETER)

Sir Pet. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the most miserable dog ever since! We tiffed a little going to church, and fairly quarrelled before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation above the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humors; yet the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

(*Enter* ROWLEY)

Row. Oh! Sir Peter, your servant: how is it with you, sir?

Sir Pet. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Row. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

Sir Pet. A good question to a married man!

Row. Nay, I'm sure your lady, Sir Peter, can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Pet. Why, has anybody told you she was dead?

Row. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree.

Sir Pet. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Row. Indeed!

Sir Pet. Ay; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition. Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Row. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in our opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honored master, was, at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he

did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

Sir Pet. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both, till their uncle Sir Oliver's liberality gave them an early independence: of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes; but, for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

Row. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

Sir Pet. What! let me hear.

Row. Sir Oliver is arrived, and at this moment in town.

Sir Pet. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

Row. I did not: but his passage has been remarkably quick.

Sir Pet. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis fifteen years since we met. We have had many a day together:—but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

Row. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

Sir Pet. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits—he shall have his way; but, pray, does he know I am married?

Row. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

Sir Pet. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption! Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, and he has been steady to his text. Well, he must be soon at my house, though—I'll instantly give orders for his reception. But, Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

Row. By no means.

Sir Pet. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'll have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

Row. I understand you:—but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

Sir Pet. Egad, and so we must—and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no—the crime carries its punishment along with it. (*Exeunt*)

ACT II

SCENE I: *Sir Peter's House*

(*Enter* SIR PETER *and* LADY TEAZLE)

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

Lady Teaz. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and, what's more, I will too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

Sir Pet. Very well, ma'am, very well; so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

Lady Teaz. Authority! No, to be sure: if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.

Sir Pet. Old enough!—ay, there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance!

Lady Teaz. My extravagance! I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much o furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon [1] into a greenhouse, and give a *fête champêtre* [2] at Christmas.

Lady Teaz. And am I to blame, Sir Peter, because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under our feet!

Sir Pet. Oons! [3] madam—if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at you talking thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady Teaz. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I should never have married you.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat a humbler style—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first sitting at your tambour, in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys at your side, your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

Lady Teaz. Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led. My daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book, and comb my aunt Deborah's lapdog.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, ma'am, 'twas so indeed.

Lady Teaz. And then you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Juan [4] with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Pet. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach—*vis-à-vis*—and three powdered footmen before your chair; and, in the summer, a pair of white cats to draw you to Kensington Gardens.[5] No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, on a docked coach-horse.

Lady Teaz. No—I swear I never did that: I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Pet. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank—in short, I have made you my wife.

Lady Teaz. Well, then, and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, that is——

Sir Pet. My widow, I suppose?

Lady Teaz. Hem! hem!

Sir Pet. I thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself, for, though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart, I promise you: however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady Teaz. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Sir Pet. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady Teaz. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

[1] A London concert hall. [2] An open air festival. [3] Contracted form of *God's wounds.* [4] A game of cards. [5] A public park in London.

Sir Pet. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion before you married me?

Lady Teaz. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Pet. Ay—there again—taste! Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady Teaz. That's very true, indeed, Sir Peter! and, after having married you, I should never pretend to taste again, I allow. But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Pet. Ay, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there!

Lady Teaz. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Pet. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves! Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle [1] who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

Lady Teaz. What, would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Pet. Ah! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady Teaz. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse: when I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor; and I take it for granted they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

Sir Pet. Well, well, I'll call in, just to look after my own character.

Lady Teaz. Then, indeed, you must make haste after me, or you'll be too late. So good-bye to ye. (*Exit* Lady Teazle)

Sir Pet. So—I have gained much by my intended expostulation! Yet with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me.

(*Exit*)

Scene II: *At Lady Sneerwell's*

(*Enter* Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, Sir Benjamin Backbite, *and* Joseph Surface)

Lady Sneer. Nay, positively, we will hear it.

Jos. Surf. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

Sir Ben. O plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

Crab. No, no; 'fore Gad, very clever for an extempore!

Sir Ben. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricle was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of duodecimo [2] phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which, I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:—

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:
To give them this title I'm sure can't be wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

Crab. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

Jos. Surf. A very Phœbus,[3] mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin!

Sir Ben. Oh dear, sir! trifles—trifles.

[1] Cart in which prisoners rode to execution.

[2] *i.e.* small

[3] Apollo

(*Enter* LADY TEAZLE *and* MARIA)

Mrs. Can. I must have a copy.

Lady Sneer. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

Lady Teaz. I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

Lady Sneer. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to piquet[1] with Mr. Surface.

Mar. I take very little pleasure in cards—however, I'll do as you please.

Lady Teaz. I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; (*Aside*) I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me before Sir Peter came.

Mrs. Can. Now, I'll die, but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.

Lady Teaz. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

Mrs. Can. They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermilion to be handsome.

Lady Sneer. Oh, surely she is a pretty woman.

Crab. I am very glad you think so, ma'am.

Mrs. Can. She has a charming fresh color.

Lady Teaz. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

Mrs. Can. Oh, fie! I'll swear her color is natural: I have seen it come and go!

Lady Teaz. I dare swear you have, ma'am: it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

Sir Ben. True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes; but, what's more, egad, her maid can fetch and carry it!

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely, now, her sister *is,* or *was,* very handsome.

Crab. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! she's six-and-fifty if she's an hour!

Mrs. Can. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost —and I don't think she looks more.

Sir Ben. Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen *does* take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre calks her wrinkles.

Sir Ben. Nay, now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill—but, when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur sees at once that the head's modern, though the trunk's antique.

Crab. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew!

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it. What do you think of Miss Simper?

Sir Ben. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

Lady Teaz. Yes; and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a jar, as it were—thus.

(*Shows her teeth*)

Mrs. Can. How can you be so ill-natured?

Lady Teaz. Nay, I allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor-box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise, as it were—thus: *How do you do, madam? Yes, madam.*

Lady Sneer. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

Lady Teaz. In defence of a friend it is but justice. But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

[1] A game of cards for two.

(*Enter* SIR PETER TEAZLE)

Sir Pet. Ladies, your most obedient.—(*Aside*) Mercy on me, here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose.

Mrs. Can. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious—and Lady Teazle as bad as any one.

Sir Pet. It must be very distressing to *you,* Mrs. Candour, I dare swear.

Mrs. Can. Oh, they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

Lady Teaz. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Quadrille's last night?

Mrs. Can. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and, when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

Lady Sneer. That's very true, indeed.

Lady Teaz. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small whey; laces herself by pulleys; and often, in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's and puffing round the Ring [1] on a full trot.

Mrs. Can. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

Sir Pet. Yes, a good defence, truly.

Mrs. Can. Truly, Lady Teazle is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

Crab. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious—an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

Mrs. Can. Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a near relation of mine by marriage, and, as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labors under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at six-and-thirty.

Lady Sneer. Though, surely, she is handsome still—and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candlelight, it is not to be wondered at.

Mrs. Can. True, and then as to her manner; upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education: for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

Sir Ben. Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

Sir Pet. Yes, damned good-natured! (*Aside*) This their own relation! mercy on me!

Mrs. Can. For my part, I own I cannot bear to hear a friend ill-spoken of.

Sir Pet. No, to be sure!

Sir Ben. Oh! you are of a moral turn, Mrs. Candour and I can sit for an hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiment.

Lady Teaz. Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner; for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes—made up of paint and proverb.

Mrs. Can. Well, I never will join in ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

Crab. Oh, to be sure! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

Sir Ben. So she has, indeed—an Irish front——

Crab. Caledonian locks——

Sir Ben. Dutch nose——

Crab. Austrian lips——

Sir Ben. Complexion of a Spaniard——

Crab. And teeth *à la Chinois*——

Sir Ben. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa [2]—where no two guests are of a nation——

Crab. Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members,

[1] A riding circle in Hyde Park.

[2] A watering place in Belgium.

even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

Mrs. Can. Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. (*Aside*) Mercy on my life! —a person they dine with twice a week!

Lady Sneer. Go, go; you are a couple of provoking toads.

Mrs. Can. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for give me leave to say, that Mrs. Ogle——

Sir Pet. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues. But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! ha! well said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

Sir Pet. Ah, madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good nature than your ladyship is aware of.

Lady Teaz. True, Sir Peter: I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

Sir Ben. Or, rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.

Lady Teaz. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by parliament.

Sir Pet. 'Fore heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as poaching on manors, and pass an act for the preservation of fame, as well as game, I believe there are many would thank them for the bill.

Lady Sneer. O Lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

Sir Pet. Ay, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

Lady Sneer. Go, you monster!

Mrs. Can. But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Pet. Yes, madam, I would have law merchant [1] for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured parties should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crab. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Sir Pet. O, nine out of ten of the malicious inventions are founded on some ridiculous misrepresentation!

Lady Sneer. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

(*Enter a* SERVANT, *who whispers* SIR PETER)

Sir Pet. I'll be with them directly.—(*Aside*) I'll get away unperceived.

(*Exit* SERVANT)

Lady Sneer. Sir Peter, you are not going to leave us?

Sir Pet. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me. (*Exit* SIR PETER)

Sir Ben. Well—certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being: I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily if he were not your husband.

Lady Teaz. Oh, pray don't mind that; come, do let's hear them. (*Joins the rest of the company going into the next room*)

Jos. Surf. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

Mar. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, Heaven grant me a double portion of dullness!

Jos. Surf. Yet they appear more ill-

[1] mercantile law

natured than they are; they have no malice at heart.

Mar. Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues but a natural and uncontrollable bitterness of mind.

Jos. Surf. Undoubtedly, madam; and it has always been a sentiment of mine, that to propagate a malicious truth wantonly is more despicable than to falsify from revenge. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Mar. Why will you distress me by renewing the subject?

Jos. Surf. Ah, Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

Mar. Ungenerously urged! But, whatever my sentiments for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up, because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

Jos. Surf. Nay, but, Maria, do not leave me with a frown: by all that's honest, I swear—— (*Kneels*)

(*Enter* LADY TEAZLE, *and comes forward*)

(*Aside*) Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle.—(*Aloud to* MARIA) You must not—no, you shall not—for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle——

Mar. Lady Teazle!

Jos. Surf. Yet were Sir Peter to suspect——

Lady Teaz. What is this, pray? Do you take her for me?—Child, you are wanted in the next room.—(*Exit* MARIA) What is all this, pray?

Jos. Surf. Oh, the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

Lady Teaz. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning—do you usually argue on your knees?

Jos. Surf. Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast——But, Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady Teaz. No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion sanctions.

Jos. Surf. True—a mere Platonic cicisbeo,[1] what every wife is entitled to.

Lady Teaz. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so much of my country prejudices left, that, though Sir Peter's ill humor may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to——

Jos. Surf. The only revenge in your power. Well, I applaud your moderation.

Lady Teaz. Go—you are an insinuating wretch! But we shall be missed—let us join the company.

Jos. Surf. But we had best not return together.

Lady Teaz. Well, don't stay; for Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. (*Exit*)

Jos. Surf. A curious dilemma my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. (*Exit*)

[1] gallant

SCENE III: *Sir Peter Teazle's*

(*Enter* ROWLEY *and* SIR OLIVER SURFACE)

Sir Oliv. Ha! ha! ha! so my old friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country. Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into a husband at last!

Row. But, you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver; 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliv. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance!—Poor Peter! But you say he has entirely given up Charles—never sees him, hey?

Row. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has industriously been led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

Sir Oliv. Ay, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time, and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it. But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you! No, no: if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound [1] for his extravagance.

Row. Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him. Ah, sir, it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him, and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

Sir Oliv. What! shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was?

Row. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family. But here comes Sir Peter.

Sir Oliv. Egad, so he does! Mercy on me! he's greatly altered, and seems to have a settled married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance.

(*Enter* SIR PETER TEAZLE)

Sir Pet. Ha! Sir Oliver—my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

Sir Oliv. Thank you, thank you, Sir Peter! and i' faith I am glad to find you well, believe me!

Sir Pet. Oh! 'tis a long time since we met—fifteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliv. Ay, I have had my share. But, what! I find you are married, hey? Well, well, it can't be helped; and so—I wish you joy with all my heart!

Sir Pet. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver.—Yes, I have entered into—the happy state; but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliv. True, true, Sir Peter; old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting. No, no, no.

Row. (*Aside to* SIR OLIVER) Take care, pray, sir.

Sir Oliv. Well, so one of my nephews is a wild fellow, hey?

Sir Pet. Wild! Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be—everybody in the world speaks well of him.

Sir Oliv. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him! Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to

[1] make an adjustment

knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

Sir Pet. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

Sir Oliv. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

Sir Pet. Well, well—you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.

Sir Oliv. Oh, plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly. But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors: but, before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

Row. And Sir Peter shall own for once he has been mistaken.

Sir Pet. Oh, my life on Joseph's honor!

Sir Oliv. Well—come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink the lads' health, and tell you our scheme.

Sir Pet. Allons, then!

Sir Oliv. And don't Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little: for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis like ivy round a sapling and spoils the growth of the tree. (*Exeunt*)

ACT III

Scene I: *Sir Peter Teazle's*

(*Enter* Sir Peter Teazle, Sir Oliver Surface, *and* Rowley)

Sir Pet. Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards. But how is this, Master Rowley? I don't see the jest of your scheme.

Row. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, who[m] I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter to Mr. Surface and Charles: from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do; and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

Sir Oliv. Ah! he is my brother's son.

Sir Pet. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to——

Row. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother that Stanley has obtained permission to apply personally to his friends; and, as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions: and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard expresses it,—

> "a heart to pity, and a hand,
> Open as day, for melting charity."[1]

Sir Pet. Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well, make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles's affairs?

Row. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence.—This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done every thing in his power to bring your

[1] Inaccurately quoted from Shakespeare: *2 Henry IV*, Act iv, sc. 4.

nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

Sir Pet. Pray let us have him in.

Row. Desire Mr. Moses to walk up stairs. (*Apart to* SERVANT)

Sir Pet. But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

Row. Oh, I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests. I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall speedily produce him to remove some of your prejudices.

Sir Pet. I have heard too much on that subject.

Row. Here comes the honest Israelite.

(*Enter* MOSES)

—This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew Charles.

Mos. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliv. That was unlucky, truly; for you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Mos. None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliv. Unfortunate, indeed! But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Mos. Yes, he knows that. This very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

Sir Pet. What, one Charles has never had money from before?

Mos. Yes, Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars, formerly a broker.

Sir Pet. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me!—Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

Mos. Not at all.

Sir Pet. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation: go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliv. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as old Stanley.

Sir Pet. True—so you may.

Row. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure. However, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful?

Mos. You may depend upon me.—[*Looks at his watch*] This is near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliv. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses——But hold! I have forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Mos. There's no need—the principal is Christian.

Sir Oliv. Is he? I'm very sorry to hear it. But, then again, a'n't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money lender?

Sir Pet. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character, if you went in your own carriage—would it, Moses?

Mos. Not in the least.

Sir Oliv. Well, but how must I talk; there's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Pet. Oh, there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands—hey, Moses?

Mos. Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oliv. I'll answer for't I'll not be

wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan, at least.

Mos. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliv. Hey! what the plague! how much then?

Mos. That depends upon the circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you may ask double.

Sir Pet. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver!

Sir Oliv. Truly, I think so—and not unprofitable.

Mos. Then, you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of an old friend.

Sir Oliv. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Mos. And your friend is an unconscionable dog: but you can't help that.

Sir Oliv. My friend an unconscionable dog?

Mos. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss.

Sir Oliv. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

Sir Pet. I' faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean—you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses! would not you have him run out a little against the Annuity Bill? [1] That would be in character, I should think.

Mos. Very much.

Row. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

Mos. Ay, great pity!

Sir Pet. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an act whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious gripe of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

Sir Oliv. So, so—Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Pet. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oliv. Oh, never fear! my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

(*Exeunt* SIR OLIVER SURFACE *and* MOSES)

Sir Pet. So, now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced: you are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Row. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Pet. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say presently. I see Maria, and want to speak with her. —(*Exit* ROWLEY) I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph—I am determined I will do it—he will give me his opinion sincerely.

(*Enter* MARIA)

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Mar. No, sir; he was engaged.

Sir Pet. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more that you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Mar. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely—you compel me to declare, that I know no man who ever paid me a particular attention whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Pet. So—here's perverseness! No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you

[1] According to the provisions of this bill, passed in May, 1777, all contracts with minors for annuities were void.

would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Mar. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him: I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Pet. Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Mar. Never to his brother!

Sir Pet. Go, perverse and obstinate! But take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is: don't compel me to inform you of it.

Mar. I can only say, you shall not have just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable.

(*Exit* MARIA)

Sir Pet. Was ever man so crossed as I am, every thing conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter.—But here comes my helpmate! She appears in great good humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little!

(*Enter* LADY TEAZLE)

Lady Teaz. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humored when I am not by.

Sir Pet. Ah, Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humored at all times.

Lady Teaz. I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good-humored now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Pet. Two hundred pounds; what, an't I to be in a good humor without paying for it? But speak to me thus, and i' faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady Teaz. Oh, no—there—my note of hand will do as well.

(*Offering her hand*)

Sir Pet. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you: but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady Teaz. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarreling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Pet. Well—then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady Teaz. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you. You look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would; and asked me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive——

Lady Teaz. Ay, so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Pet. Indeed!

Lady Teaz. Ay, and when cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any

means. And I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Pet. And you prophesied right; and we shall now be the happiest couple——

Lady Teaz. And never differ again?

Sir Pet. No, never!—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very seriously; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady Teaz. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter: indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Pet. Now see, my angel! take care—contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady Teaz. Then don't you begin it, my love!

Sir Pet. There, now! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady Teaz. Nay, you know, if you will be angry without any reason, my dear—

Sir Pet. There! now you want to quarrel again.

Lady Teaz. No, I am sure I don't: but, if you will be so peevish——

Sir Pet. There now! who begins first?

Lady Teaz. Why, you, to be sure. I said nothing—but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam: the fault's in your own temper.

Lady Teaz. Ay, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Pet. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

Lady Teaz. You are a great bear, I'm sure, to abuse my relations.

Sir Pet. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

Lady Teaz. So much the better.

Sir Pet. No, no, madam: 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest squires in the neighborhood!

Lady Teaz. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Sir Pet. Ay, ay, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me: you never had such an offer before.

Lady Teaz. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broke his neck since we have been married.

Sir Pet. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of everything that is bad. Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam. Yes, madam, *you* and Charles are, not without grounds——

Lady Teaz. Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Pet. Very well, madam! very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors. Let us separate, madam.

Lady Teaz. Agreed! agreed! And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple, and never differ again, you know: ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion I see, and I shall only interrupt you—so, bye! bye! (*Exit*)

Sir Pet. Plagues and tortures! can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the most miserable fellow! But I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper: no!

she may break my heart, but she sha'n't keep her temper. (*Exit*)

SCENE II: *Charles Surface's House*

(*Enter* TRIP, MOSES, *and* SIR OLIVER SURFACE)

Trip. Here, Master Moses! if you'll stay a moment I'll try whether—what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliv. [*Aside to* MOSES] Mr. Moses, what is my name?

Mos. Mr. Premium.

Trip. Premium—very well.

(*Exit* TRIP *taking snuff*)

Sir Oliv. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what!—sure, this was my brother's house?

Mos. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliv. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

(*Enter* TRIP)

Trip. My master says you must wait, gentlemen: he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliv. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not send such a message.

Trip. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here—I did not forget little Premium: no, no, no.

Sir Oliv. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliv. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

Trip. Why, yes—here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliv. Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinadoes! (*Aside*)

Trip. And *à propos*, Moses, have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oliv. Wants to raise money too!—mercy on me! Has his distresses too, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns. (*Aside*)

Mos. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

Trip. Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has indorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 'twas the same as cash.

Mos. No, 'twouldn't do.

Trip. A small sum—but twenty pounds. Hark'ee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oliv. An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad! (*Aside*)

Mos. Well, but you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life too, if you please.

Sir Oliv. It's more than I would your neck. (*Aside*)

Mos. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November—or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit [1] on the blue and silver;—these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security—hey, my little fellow?

[1] A form of promissory note.

Mos. Well, well. (*Bell rings*)

Trip. Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses! This way, gentlemen, I'll insure my place, you know.

Sir Oliv. If the man be a shadow of the master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed! (*Exeunt*)

SCENE III: *Another Room in the house*

(CHARLES SURFACE, CARELESS, *etc. etc. at a table with wine, etc.*)

Chas. Surf. 'Fore heaven, 'tis true!—there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

Care. It is so, indeed, Charles! they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably! for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa-water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of champagne, without its spirit or flavor.

1 *Gent.* But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

Care. True! there's Sir Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

Chas. Surf. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry; let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose—at least, I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

2 *Gent.* Ay, that I believe.

Chas. Surf. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats atop is the maid that has bewitched you.

Care. Now then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favorite.

Chas. Surf. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible—on earth.

Care. Oh! then we'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

Chas. Surf. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria! Maria!——

Sir Har. Maria who?

Chas. Surf. Oh, damn the surname!—'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar; but now, Sir Harry, beware, we must have beauty superlative.

Care. Nay, never study, Sir Harry: we'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

Sir Har. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.

SONG

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
Here's to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

Chorus. Let the toast pass,—
Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize;
Now to the maid who has none, sir:
Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
And here's to the nymph with but *one*, sir.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow;
Now to her that's as brown as a berry:
Here's to the wife with a face full of woe,
And now to the girl that is merry.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
Young or ancient, I care not a feather;
So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
And let us e'en toast them together.

Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

All. Bravo! bravo!

(*Enter* TRIP, *and whispers* CHARLES SURFACE)

Chas. Surf. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little.—Careless, take the chair, will you?

Care. Nay, pr'ithee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropped in by chance?

Chas. Surf. No, faith! To tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Care. Oh damn it! let's have the Jew in.

1 *Gent.* Ay, and the broker too, by all means.

2 *Gent.* Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

Chas. Surf. Egad, with all my heart! —Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in—though there's one of them a stranger, I can tell you.

Care. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

Chas. Surf. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

(*Enter* TRIP, SIR OLIVER SURFACE *and* MOSES)

Chas. Surf. So, honest Moses, walk in: walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

Mos. Yes, sir.

Chas. Surf. Set chairs, Trip—Sit down, Mr. Premium.—Glasses, Trip.—Sit down, Moses.—Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's *Success to usury!* —Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Mos. *Success to usury!*

Care. Right, Moses—usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir. Oliv. Then—*here's all the success it deserves!*

Care. No, no, that won't do! Mr. Premium, you have demurred at the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

1 *Gent.* A pint bumper, at least.

Mos. Oh, pray, sir, consider—Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

Care. And therefore loves good wine.

2 *Gent.* Give Moses a quart glass—this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

Care. Here, now for't! I'll see justice done to the last drop of my bottle.

Sir Oliv. Nay, pray, gentlemen—I did not expect this usage.

Chas. Surf. No, hang it, you shan't; Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Sir Oliv. Odd! I wish I was well out of their company. (*Aside*)

Care. Plague on 'em then! if they don't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room.—Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with the gentlemen?

Chas. Surf. I will! I will!—(*Exeunt*) Careless!

Care. (*Returning*) Well!

Chas. Surf. Perhaps I may want you.

Care. Oh, you know I am always ready: word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. (*Exit*)

Mos. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is——

Chas. Surf. Pshaw! have done. Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression: he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am an extravagant young fellow

who wants to borrow money; you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it; and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take a hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without farther ceremony.

Sir Oliv. Exceeding frank, upon my word. I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Chas. Surf. Oh, no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I like you the better for it. However, you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog. Isn't he, Moses?

Mos. But you can't help that.

Sir Oliv. And must sell stock to accommodate you, mustn't he, Moses?

Mos. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie!

Chas. Surf. Right. People that speak truth generally do. But these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't!

Sir Oliv. Well, but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not a mole-hill, nor a twig, but what's in the bough-pots out of the window!

Sir Oliv. Nor any stock, I presume?

Chas. Surf. Nothing but live stock—and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connections?

Sir Oliv. Why, to say truth, I am.

Chas. Surf. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations?

Sir Oliv. That you have a wealthy uncle, I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Chas. Surf. Oh, no!—there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

Sir Oliv. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true; don't you, Moses?

Mos. Oh, yes! I'll swear to't.

Sir Oliv. Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal. (*Aside*)

Chas. Surf. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life: though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me, that I give you my word, I should be very sorry to hear that anything had happened to him.

Sir Oliv. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me—for I might live to a hundred and never see the principal.

Chas. Surf. Oh, yes, you would! the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know, you would come on me for the money.

Sir Oliv. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

Chas. Surf. What! I suppose you're afraid that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

Sir Oliv. No, indeed I am not; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Chas. Surf. There again, now, you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver. Yes, yes, he breaks apace, I'm told—and is so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know him.

Sir Oliv. No! Ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his nearest relations don't know him! Ha! ha! ha! egad —ha! ha! ha!

Chas. Surf. Ha! ha!—you're glad to hear that, little Premium?

Sir Oliv. No, no, I'm not.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, you are—ha! ha! ha!—you know that mends your chance.

Sir Oliv. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over; nay, some say he is actually arrived.

Chas. Surf. Pshaw! sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't he's at this moment at Calcutta. Isn't he, Moses?

Mos. Oh, yes, certainly.

Sir Oliv. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority. Haven't I, Moses?

Mos. Yes, most undoubted!

Sir Oliv. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately, is there nothing you could dispose of?

Chas. Surf. How do you mean?

Sir Oliv. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate.

Chas. Surf. O Lud! that's gone long ago. Moses can tell you how better than I can.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation-bowls! [1] —(*Aloud*) Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compact.

Chas. Surf. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) Mercy upon me! learning that had run in the family like an heir-loom!—(*Aloud*) Pray, what are become of the books?

Chas. Surf. You must inquire of the auctioneer, Master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

[1] "Bowls received as presents from the city."

Mos. I know nothing of books.

Sir Oliv. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above; and if you have a taste for paintings, egad, you shall have 'em a bargain!

Sir Oliv. Hey! what the devil! sure, you wouldn't sell your forefathers, would you?

Chas. Surf. Every man of them, to the best bidder.

Sir Oliv. What! your great-uncles and aunts?

Chas. Surf. Ay, and my great-grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) Now I give him up!—(*Aloud*) What the plague, have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odds life! do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Chas. Surf. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry: what need you care, if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliv. Well, I'll be the purchaser: I think I can dispose of the family canvas. —(*Aside*) Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

(*Enter* CARELESS)

Care. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

Chas. Surf. I can't come yet. I'faith, we are going to have a sale above stairs; here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors!

Care. Oh, burn your ancestors!

Chas. Surf. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you: egad, you shall be auctioneer —so come along with us.

Care. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. Handle a hammer as well as a dice-box!

Sir Oliv. Oh, the profligates! (*Aside*)

Chas. Surf. Come, Moses, you shall

be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

Sir Oliv. Oh, yes, I do, vastly! Ha! ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha!—(*Aside*) Oh, the prodigal!

Chas. Surf. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance, if he can't make free with his own relations! (*Exeunt*)

ACT IV

Scene I: *Picture Room at Charles's*

(*Enter* Charles Surface, Sir Oliver Surface, Moses, *and* Careless)

Chas. Surf. Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in;—here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliv. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, these are done in the true spirit of portrait-painting; no *volontière grace* and expression. Not like the works of your modern Raphaels, who give you the strongest resemblance, yet contrive to make your portrait independent of you; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliv. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Chas. Surf. I hope not. Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family. But come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chair of my father's will answer the purpose.

Care. Ay, ay, this will do. But, Charles, I haven't a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

Chas. Surf. Egad, that's true. What parchment have we here? Oh, our genealogy in full. (*Taking pedigree down*) Here, Careless, you shall have no common bit of mahogany, here's the family tree for you, you rogue! This shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliv. What an unnatural rogue!—an *ex post facto* parricide! (*Aside*)

Care. Yes, yes, here's a bit of your generation indeed;—faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill not only serve as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain. Come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going.

Chas. Surf. Bravo, Careless! Well, here's my great-uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's[1] wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet.[2] What say you, Mr. Premium? look at him—there's a hero! not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipped captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be. What do you bid?

Mos. Mr. Premium would have *you* speak.

Chas. Surf. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oliver. (*Aside*) Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds!—(*Aloud*) Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down my uncle Richard.—Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great-aunt Deborah, done

[1] This famous general and statesman lived from 1650-1722.

[2] September, 1708

by Kneller,[1] in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness. There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock. You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself!—(*Aloud*) Five pounds ten—she's mine.

Chas. Surf. Knock down my aunt Deborah! Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs.—You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliv. Yes, truly, head-dresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

Chas. Surf. Well, take that couple for the same.

Mos. 'Tis a good bargain.

Chas. Surf. Careless!—This, now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit.—What do you rate him at, Moses?

Mos. Four guineas.

Chas. Surf. Four guineas! Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig.—Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack; do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliv. By all means.

Care. Gone!

Chas. Surf. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of parliament, and noted speakers; and, what's very extraordinary, I believe, this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

Sir Oliv. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of parliament.

Care. Well said, little Premium! I'll knock them down at forty.

Chas. Surf. Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Manchester: take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliv. No, no; six will do for the mayor.

Chas. Surf. Come, make it guineas, and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliv. They're mine.

Chas. Surf. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen. But, plague on't! we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale: what say you, little Premium? Give us three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Care. Ay, ay, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, anything to accommodate you; they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Care. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee.

Sir Oliv. Yes, sir, I mean that; though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Chas. Surf. What, that? Oh; that's my uncle Oliver! 'twas done before he went to India.

Care. Your uncle Oliver! Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw; an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliv. Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive. But I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

Chas. Surf. No, hang it! I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

[1] A portrait painter (1646-1723) patronized by English royalty.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) The rogue's my nephew after all!—(*Aloud*) But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Chas. Surf. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, havn't you got enough of them?

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) I forgive him everything!—(*Aloud*) But, sir, when I take a whim in my head, I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Chas. Surf. Don't tease me, master broker; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) How like his father the dog is!—(*Aloud*) Well, well, I have done.—(*Aside*) I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance.—(*Aloud*) Here is a draft for your sum.

Chas. Surf. Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds!

Sir Oliv. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

Chas. Surf. Zounds! no! I tell you, once more.

Sir Oliv. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time. But give me your hand on the bargain; you are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come, Moses.

Chas. Surf. Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow!—But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen.

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Chas. Surf. But hold; do now send a genteel conveyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliv. I will, I will—for all but Oliver.

Chas. Surf. Ay, all but the little nabob.

Sir Oliv. You're fixed on that?

Chas. Surf. Peremptorily.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) A dear extravagant rogue!—(*Aloud*) Good day!—Come, Moses.—(*Aside*) Let me hear now who calls him profligate.

(*Exeunt* SIR OLIVER *and* MOSES)

Care. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever saw!

Chas. Surf. Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow. —Ha! here's Rowley.—Do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a few moments.

Care. I will—but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Chas. Surf. Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

Care. Nothing else.

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, never fear.—(*Exit* CARELESS) So! this was an odd fellow, indeed. Let me see, two-thirds of this is mine by right, five hundred and thirty odd pounds: 'Fore heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for!—Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful servant.

(*Bows ceremoniously to the pictures*)

(*Enter* ROWLEY)

Ha! old Rowley! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

Row. Yes, I heard they were a-going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

Chas. Surf. Why, there's the point! my distresses are so many, that I can't afford to part with my spirits; but I shall be rich and splenetic, all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations; to be sure,

'tis very affecting, but you see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

Row. There's no making you serious a moment.

Chas. Surf. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately to old Stanley.

Row. A hundred pounds! Consider only——

Chas. Surf. Gad's life, don't talk about it! poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and, if you don't make haste, we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Row. Ah! there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb——

Chas. Surf. Be just before you're generous.—Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old, lame, hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity, for the soul of me.

Row. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection——

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, it's all very true; but, hark'ee, Rowley, while I have, by Heaven I'll give; so damn your economy and now for hazard.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE II: *The Parlor*

(*Enter* SIR OLIVER SURFACE *and* MOSES)

Mos. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliv. True, but he would not sell my picture.

Mos. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture.

Mos. And games so deep.

Sir Oliv. But he would not sell my picture. Oh, here's Rowley.

(*Enter* ROWLEY)

Row. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase——

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Row. And here has he commissioned me to redeliver you part of the purchase money—I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

Mos. Ah! there is the pity of all; he is so damned charitable.

Row. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

Sir Oliv. Well, well, I'll pay his debts, and his benevolence too. But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Row. Not yet awhile; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

(*Enter* TRIP)

Trip. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way—Moses, a word. (*Exeunt* TRIP *and* MOSES)

Sir Oliv. There's a fellow for you! Would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master!

Row. Indeed!

Sir Oliv. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business. Ah, Master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were worn a little threadbare; but now they have their vices, like their birthday clothes, with the gloss on.

(*Exeunt*)

SCENE III: *A Library in Joseph Surface's House*

(*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE *and* SERVANT)

Jos. Surf. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Ser. No, sir.

Jos. Surf. (*Aside*) I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

(*Knocking heard without*)

Ser. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Jos. Surf. Hold! See whether it is or not, before you go to the door: I have a particular message for you if it should be my brother.

Ser. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

Jos. Surf. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window—that will do; —my opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so anxious a temper.—(SERVANT *draws the screen, and exit*) I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret,—at least, till I have her more in my power.

(*Enter* LADY TEAZLE)

Lady Teaz. What, sentiment in soliloquy now? Have you been very impatient? O Lud! don't pretend to look grave. I vow I couldn't come before.

Jos. Surf. O madam, punctuality is a species of constancy, a very unfashionable quality in a lady.

Lady Teaz. Upon my word, you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-natured to me of late, and so jealous of Charles too—that's the best of the story, isn't it?

Jos. Surf. I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up. (*Aside*)

Lady Teaz. I am sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

Jos. Surf. (*Aside*) Indeed I do not.—(*Aloud*) Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady Teaz. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking, to have the most ill-natured things said of one? And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too; that's what vexes me.

Jos. Surf. Ay, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation; yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed; for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady Teaz. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of any friend; and then Sir Peter, too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed 'tis monstrous!

Jos. Surf. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broken, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to outwit him.

Lady Teaz. Indeed! So that, if he suspects me without cause, it follows, that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't?

Jos. Surf. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you: and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady Teaz. To be sure, what you say

is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence——

Jos. Surf. Ah, my dear madam, there is the great mistake! 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences? why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions? why, the consciousness of your innocence.

Lady Teaz. 'Tis very true!

Jos. Surf. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas,* you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and how ready to humor and agree with your husband.

Lady Teaz. Do you think so?

Jos. Surf. Oh, I am sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once, for—in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

Lady Teaz. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own defence, and part with my virtue to secure my reputation?

Jos. Surf. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

Lady Teaz. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

Jos. Surf. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

Lady Teaz. Why, if my understanding were once convinced——

Jos. Surf. Oh, certainly, madam, your understanding should be convinced. Yes, yes—Heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

Lady Teaz. Don't you think we may as well leave *honor* out of the question?

Jos. Surf. Ah, the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Lady Teaz. I doubt they do indeed; and I will fairly own to you, that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your *honorable logic,* after all.

Jos. Surf. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of——

(*Taking her hand*)

(*Reënter* SERVANT)

'Sdeath, you blockhead—what do you want?

Ser. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Jos. Surf. Sir Peter!—Oons—the devil!

Lady Teaz. Sir Peter! O Lud! I'm ruined! I'm ruined!

Ser. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady Teaz. Oh! I'm quite undone! What will become of me? Now, Mr. Logic—oh! he's on the stairs—I'll get behind here—and if ever I'm so imprudent again——

(*Goes behind the screen*)

Jos. Surf. Give me that book.

(*Sits down.* SERVANT *pretends to adjust his hair*)

(*Enter* SIR PETER)

Sir Pet. Ay, ever improving himself—Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface——

Jos. Surf. Oh, my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon.—(*Gaping, throws away the book*) I have been dozing over a stupid book. Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room.

Books, you know, are the only things in which I am a coxcomb.

Sir Pet. 'Tis very neat indeed. Well, well, that's proper; and you can make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps.

Jos. Surf. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Pet. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Jos. Surf. Ay, or to hide anything in a hurry either. (*Aside*)

Sir Pet. Well, I have a little private business——

Jos. Surf. (*To the* SERVANT) You need not stay.

Ser. No, sir. (*Exit*)

Jos. Surf. Here's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg——

Sir Pet. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburden my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my good friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me extremely unhappy.

Jos. Surf. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

Sir Pet. Ay, 'tis too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have pretty good authority to suppose she has formed an attachment to another.

Jos. Surf. Indeed! you astonish me!

Sir Pet. Yes! and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

Jos. Surf. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Pet. Ay, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

Jos. Surf. Yes, believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Pet. I am convinced of it. Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom we can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

Jos. Surf. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Pet. Oh, no! What say you to Charles?

Jos. Surf. My brother! impossible!

Sir Pet. Oh, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

Jos. Surf. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Pet. True; but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

Jos. Surf. Yet I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

Sir Pet. Ay; but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Jos. Surf. That's very true.

Sir Pet. And there's, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have any very great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me, the foolish old bachelor, who had married a girl.

Jos. Surf. That's true, to be sure—they would laugh.

Sir Pet. Laugh! ay, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Jos. Surf. No, you must never make it public.

Sir Pet. But then again—that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Jos. Surf. Ay, there's the point. When ingratitude barbs the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Pet. Ay—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him—my advice!

Jos. Surf. Oh, 'tis not to be credited!

There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if it should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine—I disclaim kindred with him: for the man who can break the laws of hospitality, and tempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Pet. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Jos. Surf. Yet I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

Sir Pet. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall have her own way, and be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and, if I were to die, she will find I have not been inattentive to her interest while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on. By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune at my death.

Jos. Surf. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous.—(*Aside*) I wish it may not corrupt my pupil.

Sir Pet. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

Jos. Surf. Nor I, if I could help it. (*Aside*)

Sir Pet. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your affairs with Maria.

Jos. Surf. (*Softly*) Oh, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Pet. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Jos. Surf. (*Softly*) I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate! —(*Aside*) 'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way!

Sir Pet. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with your passion for Maria, I'm sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Jos. Surf. Pray, Sir Peter, now oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never——

(*Enter* SERVANT)

Well, sir?

Ser. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

Jos. Surf. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within—I'm out for the day.

Sir Pet. Stay—hold—a thought has struck me:—you shall be at home.

Jos. Surf. Well, well, let him up. —(*Exit* SERVANT) He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however. (*Aside*)

Sir Pet. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere, then do you tax him on the point we have been talking, and his answer may satisfy me at once.

Jos. Surf. Oh, fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?—to trepan my brother too?

Sir Pet. Nay, you tell me you are sure he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me: (*Going up*) here, behind the screen will be—Hey! what the devil!

there seems to be one listener there already—I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

Jos. Surf. Ha! ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner, a silly rogue that plagues me; and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

Sir Pet. Ah, you rogue! But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Jos. Surf. Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it!

Sir Pet. No! then, faith, let her hear it out.—Here's a closet will do as well.

Jos. Surf. Well, go in there.

Sir Pet. Sly rogue! sly rogue! (*Going into the closet*)

Jos. Surf. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady Teaz. (*Peeping*) Couldn't I steal off?

Jos. Surf. Keep close, my angel!

Sir Pet. (*Peeping*) Joseph, tax him home.

Jos. Surf. Back, my dear friend!

Lady Teaz. (*Peeping*) Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

Jos. Surf. Be still, my life!

Sir Pet. (*Peeping*) You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Jos. Surf. In, in, my good Sir Peter! —'Fore Gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

(*Enter* CHARLES SURFACE)

Chas. Surf. Holla! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Jos. Surf. Neither, brother, I assure you.

Chas. Surf. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Jos. Surf. He *was*, brother; but, hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

Chas. Surf. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Jos. Surf. No, sir: but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Chas. Surf. Yes, they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men. But how so, pray?

Jos. Surf. To be plain with you, brother, he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Chas. Surf. Who, I? O Lud! not I, upon my word.—Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?—or, what is worse, Lady Teazle has found out she has an old husband?

Jos. Surf. This is no subject to jest on, brother. He who can laugh——

Chas. Surf. True, true, as you were going to say—then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Jos. Surf. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this.

(*Aloud*)

Chas. Surf. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement. Besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Jos. Surf. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you——

Chas. Surf. Why, look'ee, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action; but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father——

Jos. Surf. Well!

Chas. Surf. Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all. But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming *me* with Lady Teazle; for, 'faith, I always understood you were her favorite.

Jos. Surf. Oh, for shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Chas. Surf. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances——

Jos. Surf. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Chas. Surf. Egad, I'm serious! Don't you remember one day, when I called here——

Jos. Surf. Nay, pr'ithee, Charles——

Chas. Surf. And found you together——

Jos. Surf. Zounds, sir, I insist——

Chas. Surf. And another time when your servant——

Jos. Surf. Brother, brother, a word with you!—(*Aside*) Gad, I must stop him.

Chas. Surf. Informed, I say, that——

Jos. Surf. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you would clear yourself, or I should not have consented.

Chas. Surf. How, Sir Peter! Where is he?

Jos. Surf. Softly, there!

(*Points to the closet*)

Chas. Surf. Oh, 'fore Heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

Jos. Surf. No, no——

Chas. Surf. I say, Sir Peter, come into court.—(*Pulls in* Sir Peter) What! my old guardian!—What! turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog.?

Sir Pet. Give me your hand, Charles—I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph—'twas my plan!

Chas. Surf. Indeed!

Sir Pet. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did: what I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Chas. Surf. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more. (*Apart to* Joseph) Wasn't it, Joseph?

Sir Pet. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Chas. Surf. Ah, ay, that was a joke.

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

Chas. Surf. But you might as well have suspected *him* as *me* in this matter, for all that. (*Apart to* Joseph) Mightn't he, Joseph?

Sir Pet. Well, well, I believe you.

Jos. Surf. (*Aside*) Would they were both well out of the room!

Sir Pet. And in the future, perhaps, we may not be such strangers.

(*Enter* Servant, *and whispers* Joseph Surface)

Jos. Surf. Gentlemen, I beg pardon—I must wait on you down stairs: here is a person come on particular business.

Chas. Surf. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Jos. Surf. (*Aside*) They must not be left together.—(*Aloud*) I'll send this man away, and return directly.—(*Apart to* Sir Peter *and goes out*) Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Pet. (*Apart to* Joseph) I! not for the world!—Ah, Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment. Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment.

Chas. Surf. Pshaw! he is too moral by half; and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a girl.

Sir Pet. No, no,—come, come,—you

wrong him. No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint either, in that respect.—(*Aside*) I have a great mind to tell him—we should have a laugh at Joseph.

Chas. Surf. Oh, hang him! he's a very anchorite, a young hermit!

Sir Pet. Hark'ee—you must not abuse him: he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Chas. Surf. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Pet. No—but—this way.—(*Aside*) Egad, I'll tell him.—(*Aloud*) Hark'ee—have you a mind to have a good laugh at Joseph?

Chas. Surf. I should like it of all things.

Sir Pet. Then, i' faith, we will! I'll be quit with him for discovering me. He had a girl with him when I called.

Chas. Surf. What! Joseph? you jest.

Sir Pet. Hush!—a little French milliner—and the best of the jest is—she's in the room now.

Chas. Surf. The devil she is!

Sir Pet. Hush! I tell you.

(*Points to the screen*)

Chas. Surf. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

Sir Pet. No, no, he's coming:—you sha'n't, indeed!

Chas. Surf. Oh, egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

Sir Pet. Not for the world!—Joseph will never forgive me.

Chas. Surf. I'll stand by you——

Sir Pet. Odds, here he is!

(JOSEPH SURFACE *enters just as* CHARLES SURFACE *throws down the screen*)

Chas. Surf. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful.

Sir Pet. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

Chas. Surf. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret. Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word!—Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too?—Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute!—Well—though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another; so I'll leave you to yourselves.—(*Going*) Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man cause for so much uneasiness—Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!

(*Exit* CHARLES)

(*They stand for some time looking at each other*)

Jos. Surf. Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

Sir Pet. If you please, sir.

Jos. Surf. The fact is, sir, that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward Maria—I say, sir, Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the jealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendship to the family—she, sir, I say—called here—in order that—I might explain these pretensions—but on your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—of your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may depend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Pet. A very clear account, upon my word; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for every article of it.

Lady Teaz. For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

Sir Pet. How! don't you think it worth while to agree in the lie?

Lady Teaz. There is not one syllable of truth in what that gentleman has told you.

Sir Pet. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

Jos. Surf. (*Aside to* Lady Teazle) 'Sdeath, madam, will you betray me?

Lady Teaz. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I'll speak for myself.

Sir Pet. Ay, let her alone, sir; you'll find she'll make out a better story than you, without prompting.

Lady Teaz. Hear me, Sir Peter—I came hither on no matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant of this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came, seduced by his insidious arguments, at least to listen to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice your honor to his baseness.

Sir Pet. Now I believe the truth is coming, indeed!

Jos. Surf. The woman's mad!

Lady Teaz. No, sir; she has recovered her senses, and your own arts have furnished her with the means.—Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit me—but the tenderness you expressed for me, when I am sure you could not think I was a witness to it, has penetrated so to my heart, that had I left the place without the shame of this discovery, my future life should have spoken the sincerity of my gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hypocrite, who would have seduced the wife of his too credulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward —I behold him now in a light so truly despicable, that I shall never again respect myself for having listened to him.

(*Exit* Lady Teazle)

Jos. Surf. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows——

Sir Pet. That you are a villain! and so I leave you to your conscience.

Jos. Surf. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you shall hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to——

(*Exeunt* Sir Peter *and* Surface *talking*)

ACT V

Scene I: *The Library*

(*Enter* Joseph Surface *and* Servant)

Jos. Surf. Mr. Stanley! and why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

Ser. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Jos. Surf. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations!—Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

Ser. I will, sir.—Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady——

Jos. Surf. Go, fool!—(*Exit* Servant) Sure Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before! My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses! I sha'n't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley.—So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face, however.

(*Exit*)

(*Enter* Sir Oliver Surface *and* Rowley)

Sir Oliv. What! does he avoid us? That was he, was it not?

Row. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak, that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break it to him.

Sir Oliv. Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Row. As to his way of thinking, I can-

not pretend to decide; for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliv. Yet he has a string of charitable sentiments at his fingers' ends.

Row. Or, rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has such faith in as that *Charity begins at home.*

Sir Oliv. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort which never stirs abroad at all.

Row. I doubt you'll find it so; but he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

Sir Oliv. True; and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Row. Without losing a moment.

(*Exit*)

Sir Oliv. I don't like the complaisance of his features.

(*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE)

Jos. Surf. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting.—Mr. Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliv. At your service.

Jos. Surf. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down—I entreat you, sir.

Sir Oliv. Dear sir—there's no occasion.—(*Aside*) Too civil by half!

Jos. Surf. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

Sir Oliv. I was, sir; so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Jos. Surf. Dear sir, there needs no apology;—he that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oliv. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

Jos. Surf. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart: you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

Sir Oliv. I should not need one—my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty would enable you to become the agent of his charity.

Jos. Surf. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy man; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing; though people, I know, have thought otherwise, and for my part, I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliv. What! has he never transmitted you bullion—rupees—pagodas? [1]

Jos. Surf. Oh, dear sir, nothing of the kind. No, no; a few presents now and then—china, shawls, congo tea, avadavats [2] and Indian crackers—little more, believe me.

Sir Oliv. Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds!—(*Aside*) Avadavats and Indian crackers!

Jos. Surf. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother: there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) Not I, for one!

Jos. Surf. The sums I have lent him! Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame; it was an amiable weakness; however, I don't pretend to defend it—and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the pleasure of serving you, Mr. Stanley, as my heart dictates.

[1] Indian coins [2] Indian song-birds

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) Dissembler!—(*Aloud*) Then, sir, you can't assist me?

Jos. Surf. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but, whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

Sir Oliv. I am extremely sorry——

Jos. Surf. Not more than I, believe me; to pity, without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

Sir Oliv. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Jos. Surf. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley.—William, be ready to open the door.

Sir Oliv. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

Jos. Surf. Your very obedient.

Sir Oliv. Sir, your most obsequious.

Jos. Surf. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oliv. Sweet sir, you are too good!

Jos. Surf. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliv. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

Jos. Surf. Sir, yours as sincerely.

Sir Oliv. (*Aside*) Charles, you are my heir. (*Exit*)

Jos. Surf. This is one bad effect of a good character; it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities; whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a show, and pays no tax.

(*Enter* ROWLEY)

Row. Mr. Surface, your servant: I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

Jos. Surf. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley.—(*Reads the letter*) Sir Oliver Surface!—My uncle arrived!

Row. He is, indeed: we have just parted—quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

Jos. Surf. I am astonished!—William, stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone.

Row. Oh! he's out of reach, I believe.

Jos. Surf. Why did you not let me know this when you came in together?

Row. I thought you had particular business. But I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet your uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

Jos. Surf. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming.—(*Aside*) Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky!

Row. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

Jos. Surf. Ah! I'm overjoyed to hear it.—(*Aside*) Just at this time!

Row. I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

Jos. Surf. Do, do; pray give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him.—(*Exit* ROWLEY) Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruellest piece of ill fortune. (*Exit*)

SCENE II: *Sir Peter Teazle's*

(*Enter* MRS. CANDOUR *and* MAID)

Maid. Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

Mrs. Can. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

Maid. Yes, ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

Mrs. Can. Do go again; I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress.—(*Exit* MAID) Dear heart, how pro-

voking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

(*Enter* SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE)

Oh, dear Sir Benjamin! you have heard, I suppose——

Sir Ben. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface——

Mrs. Can. And Sir Peter's discovery——

Sir Ben. Oh, the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

Mrs. Can. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed.

Sir Ben. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all: he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

Mrs. Can. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected.

Sir Ben. No, no, I tell you: Mr. Surface is the gallant.

Mrs. Can. No such thing! Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

Sir Ben. I tell you I had it from one——

Mrs. Can. And I have it from one——

Sir Ben. Who had it from one, who had it——

Mrs. Can. From one immediately—but here comes Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

(*Enter* LADY SNEERWELL)

Lady Sneer. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Lady Teazle!

Mrs. Can. Ay, my dear friend, who would have thought——

Lady Sneer. Well, there is no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

Mrs. Can. To be sure, her manners were a little too free; but then she was so young!

Lady Sneer. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

Mrs. Can. So she had, indeed. But have you heard the particulars?

Lady Sneer. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface——

Sir Ben. Ay, there; I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

Mrs. Can. No, no: indeed the assignation was with Charles.

Lady Sneer. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour!

Mrs. Can. Yes, yes; he was the lover. Mr. Surface, to do him justice, was only the informer.

Sir Ben. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not——

Mrs. Can. Sir Peter's wound! Oh, mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneer. Nor I, a syllable.

Sir Ben. No! what, no mention of the duel?

Mrs. Can. Not a word.

Sir Ben. Oh, yes: they fought before they left the room.

Lady Sneer. Pray, let us hear.

Mrs. Can. Ay, do oblige us with the duel.

Sir Ben. *Sir,* says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, *you are a most ungrateful fellow.*

Mrs. Can. Ay, to Charles——

Sir Ben. No, no—to Mr. Surface—*a most ungrateful fellow; and old as I am, sir,* says he, *I insist on immediate satisfaction.*

Mrs. Can. Ay, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should fight in his own house.

Sir Ben. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all —*giving me immediate satisfaction.*—On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir

Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords——

(*Enter* CRABTREE)

Crab. With pistols, nephew, pistols! I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Can. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

Crab. Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter is dangerously wounded——

Sir Ben. By a thrust in second quite through his left side——

Crab. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Can. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter.

Crab. Yes, madam; though Charles would have avoided the matter, if he could.

Mrs. Can. I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Ben. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

Crab. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

Sir Ben. That I told you, you know——

Crab. Do, nephew, let me speak!—and insisted on immediate——

Sir Ben. Just as I said——

Crab. Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too! A pair of pistols lay on the bureau (for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill, where he had been to see the Montem with a friend, who has a son at Eton), so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

Sir Ben. I heard nothing of this.

Crab. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took effect, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but, what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Shakespeare that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Ben. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

Lady Sneer. (*Aside*) I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information.

(*Exit*)

Sir Ben. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crab. Yes, yes, they certainly do say —but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Can. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

Crab. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

Mrs. Can. I believe so, and Lady Teazle I suppose, attending him.

Crab. Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

Sir Ben. Hey! who comes here?

Crab. Oh, this is he: the physician, depend on't.

Mrs. Can. Oh, certainly! it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

(*Enter* SIR OLIVER SURFACE)

Crab. Well, doctor, what hopes?

Mrs. Can. Ay, doctor, how's your patient?

Sir Ben. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small-sword?

Crab. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred!

Sir Oliv. Doctor! a wound with a small-sword! and a bullet in the thorax! —Oons! are you mad, good people?

Sir Ben. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

Sir Oliv. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree, if I am.

Crab. Only a friend of Sir Peter's,

then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident?

Sir Oliv. Not a word!

Crab. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

Sir Oliv. The devil he is!

Sir Ben. Run through the body——

Crab. Shot in the breast——

Sir Ben. By one Mr. Surface——

Crab. Ay, the younger.

Sir Oliv. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts: however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

Sir Ben. Oh, yes, we agree there.

Crab. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

Sir Oliv. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

(*Enter* SIR PETER TEAZLE)

Odds heart, Sir Peter! you are come in good time, I promise you; for we had just given you over!

Sir Ben. Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

Sir Oliv. Why, man! what do you out of bed with a small-sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

Sir Pet. A small-sword and a bullet!

Sir Oliv. Ay; these gentlemen would have killed you without law or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, to make me an accomplice.

Sir Pet. Why, what is all this?

Sir Ben. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

Sir Pet. So, so; all over the town already! (*Aside*)

Crab. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at your years.

Sir Peter. Sir, what business is that of yours?

Mrs. Can. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

Sir Pet. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

Sir Ben. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

Sir Pet. Sir, sir! I desire to be master in my own house.

Crab. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

Sir Pet. I insist on being left to myself: without ceremony, I insist on your leaving my house directly!

Mrs. Can. Well, well, we are going; and depend on't, we'll make the best report of it we can. (*Exit*)

Sir Pet. Leave my house!

Crab. And tell how hardly you've been treated. (*Exit*)

Sir Pet. Leave my house!

Sir Ben. And how patiently you bear it. (*Exit*)

Sir Pet. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

Sir Oliv. They were very provoking indeed, Sir Peter.

(*Enter* ROWLEY)

Row. I heard high words: what has ruffled you, sir?

Sir Pet. Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

Row. Well, I'm not inquisitive.

Sir Oliv. Well, Sir Peter, I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

Sir Pet. A precious couple they are!

Row. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

Sir Oliv. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

Row. Ay, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

Sir Oliv. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

Row. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

Sir Oliv. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age!—but how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Row. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Pet. Pshaw! plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Row. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled, that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Pet. And does Sir Oliver know all this?

Sir Oliv. Every circumstance.

Sir Pet. What, of the closet and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliv. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oliv. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you: ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Oh, vastly diverting! ha! ha! ha!

Row. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, his sentiments! ha! ha! ha! Hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliv. Ay, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet: ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

Sir Oliv. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha!

Sir Pet. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

Sir Oliv. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Pet. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account: it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S——, Lady T——, and Sir P——, will be so entertaining!

Row. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools. But I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

Sir Oliv. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

Sir Pet. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart; though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

Row. We'll follow.

(*Exit* Sir Oliver)

Sir Pet. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Row. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she is in tears.

Sir Pet. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Row. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

Sir Pet. Well, I know not what to

think. You remember the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles?

Row. A mere forgery, Sir Peter! laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction of.

Sir Pet. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Row. Certainly.

Sir Pet. Though when it is known that we are reconciled, people will laugh at me ten times more.

Row. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Pet. I' faith, so I will! and, if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Row. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion——

Sir Pet. Hold, Master Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment: I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III: *The Library in Joseph Surface's House*

(*Enter* JOSEPH SURFACE *and* LADY SNEERWELL)

Lady Sneer. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of course no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

Jos. Surf. Can passion furnish a remedy?

Lady Sneer. No, nor cunning either. Oh, I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

Jos. Surf. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

Lady Sneer. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

Jos. Surf. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

Lady Sneer. Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in imposing upon Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavor to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Jos. Surf. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

Lady Sneer. No!

Jos. Surf. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us?

Lady Sneer. I do believe so.

Jos. Surf. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support?

Lady Sneer. This, indeed, might have assisted.

Jos. Surf. Come, come; it is not too late yet.—(*Knocking at the door*) But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver: retire to that room; we'll consult farther when he is gone.

Lady Sneer. Well, but if *he* should find you out too?

Jos. Surf. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake—and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

Lady Sneer. I have no diffidence of

your abilities: only be constant to one roguery at a time.

Jos. Surf. I will, I will!—(*Exit* Lady Sneerwell) So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events, my character is so much better than Charles's, that I certainly—hey!—what—this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now! I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here—and——

(*Enter* Sir Oliver Surface)

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliv. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

Jos. Surf. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg—— Come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliv. No: Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Jos. Surf. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliv. Nay, sir——

Jos. Surf. Sir, I insist on't!—Here, William! show this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir, not one moment—this is such insolence.

(*Going to push him out*)

(*Enter* Charles Surface)

Chas. Surf. Heyday! what's the matter now? What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

Jos. Surf. So! he has been with you too, has he?

Chas. Surf. To be sure, he has. Why, he's as honest a little— But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Jos. Surf. Borrowing! no! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every——

Chas. Surf. O Gad, that's true! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

Jos. Surf. Yet Mr. Stanley insists——

Chas. Surf. Stanley! why his name's Premium.

Jos. Surf. No, sir, Stanley.

Chas. Surf. No, no, Premium.

Jos. Surf. Well, no matter which—but——

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing, as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffee-house.[1]

(*Knocking*)

Jos. Surf. 'Sdeath! here's Sir Oliver at the door.—Now, I beg, Mr. Stanley——

Chas. Surf. Ay, ay, and I beg, Mr. Premium——

Sir Oliv. Gentlemen——

Jos. Surf. Sir, by Heaven you shall go.

Chas. Surf. Ay, out with him, certainly!

Sir Oliv. This violence——

Jos. Surf. Sir, 'tis your own fault.

Chas. Surf. Out with him, to be sure.

(*Both forcing* Sir Oliver *out*)

(*Enter* Sir Peter *and* Lady Teazle, Maria, *and* Rowley)

Sir Pet. My old friend, Sir Oliver—hey! What in the name of wonder—here are dutiful nephews—assault their uncle at a first visit!

Lady Teaz. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to rescue you.

Row. Truly it was; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was no protection to you.

Sir Oliv. Nor of Premium either: the

[1] i.e. concealing his name

necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman; and now, egad, I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

Jos. Surf. Charles!

Chas. Surf. Joseph!

Jos. Surf. 'Tis now complete!

Chas. Surf. Very.

Sir Oliv. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley too—look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty; and you also know how gladly I would have regarded half my fortune as held in trust for him: judge then my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of faith, charity, and gratitude!

Sir Pet. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration, if I had not myself found him to be mean, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady Teaz. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call *me* to his character.

Sir Pet. Then, I believe, we need add no more: if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment that he is known to the world.

Chas. Surf. If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me, by and by? (*Aside*)

(SIR PETER, LADY TEAZLE, *and* MARIA *retire*)

Sir Oliv. As for that prodigal, his brother, there——

Chas. Surf. Ay, now comes my turn: the damned family pictures will ruin me! (*Aside*)

Jos. Surf. Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

Chas. Surf. Now, if Joseph would make one of his long speeches, I might recollect myself a little. (*Aside*)

Sir Oliv. (*To* JOSEPH) I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself?

Jos. Surf. I trust I could.

Sir Oliv. (*To* CHARLES) Well, sir!—and you could justify yourself, too, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliv. What!—Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I suppose?

Chas. Surf. True, sir; but they were *family* secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Row. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliv. Odds heart, no more I can; nor with gravity either. Sir Peter, do you know the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors; sold me judges and generals by the foot, and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Chas. Surf. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you—and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not—that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliv. Charles, I believe you. Give me your hand again: the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Chas. Surf. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady Teazle. Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to. (*Pointing to* MARIA)

Sir Oliv. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and, with the young

lady's pardon, if I construe right—that blush——

Sir Pet. Well, child, speak your sentiments!

Mar. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me, whatever claim I had to his affection, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

Chas. Surf. How, Maria!

Sir Pet. Heyday! what's the mystery now? While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform I'll warrant you won't have him!

Mar. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Chas. Surf. Lady Sneerwell!

Jos. Surf. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. (*Opens the door*)

(*Enter* LADY SNEERWELL)

Sir Pet. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose!

Lady Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Chas. Surf. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Jos. Surf. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Pet. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake.—Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Row. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

(*Enter* SNAKE)

I thought his testimony might be wanted: however, it happens unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, not to support her.

Lady Sneer. A villain! Treacherous to me at last! Speak, fellow, have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons: you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

Sir Pet. Plot and counter-plot, egad!

Lady Sneer. The torments of shame and disappointment on you all.

(*Going*)

Lady Teaz. Hold, Lady Sneerwell—before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the scandalous college, of which you are president, and inform them, that Lady Teazle, licentiate,[1] begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneer. You too, madam!—provoking—insolent! May your husband live these fifty years! (*Exit*)

Sir Pet. Ooons! what a fury!

Lady Teaz. A malicious creature, indeed!

Sir Pet. Hey! Not for her last wish?

Lady Teaz. Oh, no!

Sir Oliv. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Jos. Surf. Sir, I am so confounded, to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say: however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. (*Exit*)

Sir Pet. Moral to the last!

Sir Oliv. Ay, and marry her, Joseph,

[1] One licensed to practise.

if you can. Oil and vinegar, egad! you'll do very well together.

Row. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

Snake. Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Pet. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake. But I must request of the company that it shall never be known.

Sir Pet. Hey! what the plague! are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

Snake. Ah, sir, consider—I live by the badness of my character; I have nothing but my infamy to depend on! and, if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

Sir Oliv. Well, well—we'll not traduce you by saying anything in your praise, never fear. (*Exit* SNAKE)

Sir Pet. There's a precious rogue!

Lady Teaz. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliv. Ay, ay, that's as it should be, and, egad, we'll have the wedding tomorrow morning.

Chas. Surf. Thank you, dear uncle.

Sir Pet. What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Chas. Surf. Oh, I have done that a long time—a minute ago—and she has looked yes.

Mar. For shame, Charles!—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word——

Sir Oliv. Well, then, the fewer the better; may your love for each other never know abatement.

Sir Pet. And may you live as happily together as Lady Teazle and I intend to do!

Chas. Surf. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oliv. You do, indeed, Charles.

Row. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded you would have been in my debt for the attempt; but deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

Sir Pet. Ay, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Chas. Surf. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it. But here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide.—Ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Though thou, dear maid, shouldst waive
thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey:
An humble fugitive from Folly, view,
No sanctuary near but Love and you:
(*To the audience*)
You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies, if you approve.

EPILOGUE

BY MR. COLMAN [1]

SPOKEN BY LADY TEAZLE

I, who was late so volatile and gay,
Like a trade-wind must now blow all one
way,
Bend all my cares, my studies, and my
vows,
To one dull rusty weathercock—my
spouse!
So wills our virtuous bard—the motley
Bayes [2]
Of crying epilogues and laughing plays!
Old bachelors, who marry smart young
wives,

[1] A dramatist and manager of the Haymarket Theatre.

[2] A character in *The Rehearsal* (1671).

Learn from our play to regulate your lives:
Each bring his dear to town, all faults upon her—
London will prove the very source of honor.
Plunged fairly in, like a cold bath it serves,
When principles relax, to brace the nerves:
Such is my case; and yet I must deplore
That the gay dream of dissipation's o'er.
And say, ye fair! was ever lively wife,
Born with a genius for the highest life,
Like me untimely blasted in her bloom,
Like me condemn'd to such a dismal doom?
Save money—when I just knew how to waste it!
Leave London—just as I began to taste it!
Must I then watch the early crowing cock,
The melancholy ticking of a clock;
In a lone rustic hall for ever pounded,
With dogs, cats, rats, and squalling brats surrounded?
With humble curate can I now retire,
(While good Sir Peter boozes with the squire),
And at backgammon mortify my soul,
That pants for loo, or flutters at a vole? [1]
Seven's the main! [2] Dear sound that must expire,
Lost at hot cockles round a Christmas fire!
The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!
Farewell the plumèd head, the cushion'd tête,
That takes the cushion from its proper seat!
That spirit-stirring drum!—card drums I mean,
Spadille—odd trick—pam—basto—king and queen! [3]
And you, ye knockers, that, with brazen throat,
The welcome visitors' approach denote;
Farewell all quality of high renown,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious town!
Farewell! your revels I partake no more,
And Lady Teazle's occupation's o'er!
All this I told our bard; he smiled, and said 'twas clear,
I ought to play deep tragedy next year.
Meanwhile he drew wise morals from his play,
And in these solemn periods stalk'd away:—
Blessed were the fair like you; her faults who stopped
And closed her follies when the curtain dropped!
No more in vice or error to engage,
Or play the fool at large on life's great stage.

[1] A game of cards.

[2] A sweep, or the taking of all the tricks.

[3] Cards in the game of ombre: spadille, the ace of spades; pam, the Jack of clubs; basto, the ace of clubs.

LYRIC POETRY OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

The early nineteenth century, like the Age of Elizabeth, was a favorable time for the development of lyric poetry. During the latter part of the preceding century the rationalism that had dominated the Age of Pope gave way and the value of the emotions and the imagination in human life was once more appreciated. There came changes of political and social significance. Instead of bowing in subservience to social conventions that were beneficial to the group, men recognized increasingly the right of an individual to express himself freely and naturally. These social changes brought changes in the expression of life in literature and in standards of literary taste; and by the last decades of the eighteenth century writers were finding new subjects in the beauties of the countryside, in humble life, and in the real, vital experiences of everyday life. Less emphasis was placed upon precision and rhetoric, and more attention given to expressing naturally what lay closest to the heart. It is lyric poetry that is concerned with just these things,—the expression with enthusiasm and directness of the personal thoughts and emotions of the individual.

The lyric poets here represented indicate somewhat the wide range of the lyrics of the time. Robert Burns, the Scotch farmer poet, found his subjects in the world immediately about him, in animals, and in the warm human relationships of men and women that make for happiness. William Wordsworth, living quietly in Northern England, found in Nature the force that would guide man safely, would comfort him and heal the scars of life, and would develop strength and dignity of character; so he wrote of "plain living and high thinking." John Keats, lover of beauty, turned his thoughts to the picturesque past of Greece and medieval England and to the representation of beauty through art. Percy Bysshe Shelley, the idealist worshiping the spirit of freedom, wrote of the upper air, of clouds, the west wind, the skylark,—of the aspiration of the human soul in its longing for the unattainable. Lord Byron wrote much descriptive and narrative poetry, but had also the ability to express lyrically his personal emotions.

Of the group Burns and Shelley have the song quality that was so conspicuous in the earlier lyrics of Elizabeth's day. In general, however, the lyrics of the period are more concerned with interpreting life for us. Each poet gives freely of himself as he translates life through the medium of his personality, and each in his own way reveals the beauty and truth that are the concern of every artist.

ROBERT BURNS (1759–1796)

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785

Wee, sleekit,[1] cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
Oh, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou needna start awa' sae hasty,
Wi' bickerin'[2] brattle![3]
I wad be laith[4] to rin and chase thee
Wi murd'ring pattle![5]

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earthborn companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubtna, whiles,[6] but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun[7]
live!
A daimen[8] icker[9] in a thrave[10]
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,[11]
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
And naething now to big[12] a new ane
O' foggage[13] green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell[14] an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter[15] passed
Out through thy cell.

That wee-bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Hast cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out for a' thy trouble,
But[16] house or hald,
To thole[17] the winter's sleety dribble,
And cranreuch[18] cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,[19]
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang aft a-gley,[20]
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, though I canna see,
I guess an' fear.

[1] sleek
[2] hurrying
[3] clatter
[4] loth
[5] plow-spade
[6] sometimes
[7] must
[8] occasional
[9] ear
[10] twenty-four sheaves
[11] rest
[12] build
[13] rank grass
[14] piercing
[15] plowshare
[16] without
[17] endure
[18] hoar frost
[19] alone
[20] amiss

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH IN APRIL, 1786

Wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun[21] crush amang the stoure[22]
Thy slender stem:
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonnie lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi's speckled breast,
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east!

Cauld blew the bitter biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;

[21] must
[22] dust

Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's[1] maun shield,
But thou, beneath the random bield[2]
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie[3] stibble-field,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betrayed,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskillful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,
Till wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruined, sink!

Even thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date;
Stern Ruin's ploughshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom.

[1] walls
[2] shelter
[3] parched

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET

While winds frae aff Ben-Lomond blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing[4] us owre the ingle,[5]
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or two o' rhyme,
In hamely westlin'[6] jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben[7] to the chimla lug,[8]
I grudge a wee the great-folk's gift,
That live sae bien[9] and snug:
I tent[10] less, and want less
Their roomy fireside;
But hanker and canker
To see their cursed pride.

It's hardly in a body's pow'r
To keep, at times, frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels[11] are whiles in want,
While coofs[12] on countless thousands rant,[13]
And ken na how to wair't;[14]

But, Davie, lad, ne'er fash[15] your head;
Tho' we hae little gear,[16]
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier[17]
"Mair spier[18] na, nor fear na,"
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,[19]
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only but to beg.

To lie in kilns an' barns at e'en,
When banes are crazed, and bluid is thin,
Is doubtless great distress!
Yet then content could mak us blest;
Ev'n then, sometimes, we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.

[4] hang
[5] fire
[6] westerly
[7] in
[8] side of the fireplace
[9] comfortable
[10] heed
[11] fellows
[12] fools
[13] riot
[14] spend it
[15] bother
[16] wealth
[17] sound
[18] ask
[19] fig

The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has ay some cause to smile:
And mind still, you'll find still
A comfort this nae sma';
Nae mair then we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

What though, like commoners of air,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hal'?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,
With honest joy our hearts will bound
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please then,
We'll sit and sowth [1] a tune;
Syne [2] rhyme till't,[3] we'll time till't,
And sing't when we hae dune.

It's no in titles nor in rank,
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in makin' muckle *mair;* [4]
It's no in books; it's no in lear,[5]
To mak us truly blest;
If happiness hae not her seat
And center in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang;
The heart ay's the part ay
That makes us right or wrang.

Think ye, that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive thro' wet an' dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?

Alas! how aft, in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess!
Baith careless and fearless
Of either heaven or hell!
Esteeming and deeming
It's a' an idle tale.

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And even should misfortunes come,
I, here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An 's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie [6] the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel;
They mak us see the naked truth,
The real guid and ill.
Though losses and crosses
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

But tent me, Davie, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught less wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
The lover and the frien';
Ye hae your Meg, your dearest part,
And I my darling Jean!
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her name:
It heats me, it beets [7] me,
And sets me a' on flame!

O all ye Pow'rs who rule above!
O Thou whose very self art love!
Thou know'st my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!

[1] whistle softly
[2] then
[3] to it
[4] more
[5] learning
[6] give
[7] incites

When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou Being, all-seeing,
Oh, hear my fervent prayer!
Still take her, and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow!
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had number'd out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In ev'ry care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My Davie or my Jean!

Oh, how that name inspires my style!
The words come skelpin',[1] rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine
As Phœbus and the famous Nine
Were glow'rin' owre my pen.
My spaviet [2] Pegasus will limp,
Till ance he's fairly het; [3]
And then he'll hilch,[4] and stilt,[5] and jimp,
And rin an unco fit:
But least then, the beast then
Should rue this hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty, wizen'd [6] hide.

A BARD'S EPITAPH

Is there a whim-inspir'd fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate [7] to seek, owre proud to snool,[8]
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,[9]
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,
That weekly this area throng,
Oh, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man whose judgment clear
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs himself life's mad career,
Wild as the wave;
Here pause—and, through the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below
Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame;
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stained his name!

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious self-control
Is wisdom's root.

SONGS

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT

Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that!

[1] slapping
[2] spavined
[3] warm
[4] curvet
[5] prance
[6] wrinkled
[7] bashful
[8] cringe
[9] sorrow

For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gowd [1] for a' that!

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden-gray,[2] and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that!

Ye see yon birkie,[3] ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof [4] for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
His ribband, star, and a' that;
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon [5] his might,
Guid faith, he mauna fa' [6] that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that;
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may—
As come it will for a' that—
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree,[7] and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that!

[1] gold
[2] homespun gray cloth
[3] fellow
[4] fool
[5] above
[6] cannot claim
[7] prize

MARY MORISON

O Mary, at thy window be,
It is the wished, the trysted hour!
Those smiles and glances let me see,
That make the miser's treasure poor:
How blithely wad I bide the stoure,[8]
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling string
The dance gaed through the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw.
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,[9]
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sighed, and said amang them a':
"Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison.

FLOW GENTLY, SWEET AFTON

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,[10]
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds thro' the glen,
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon thorny den,

[8] struggle
[9] handsome
[10] hillside slopes

Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighboring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear winding rills
There daily I wander as noon rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow
There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk [1] shades my Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems thy clear wave.

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays,
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

HIGHLAND MARY

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie [2]
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the langest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow, and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder:
But oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly,
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mould'ring now in silent dust
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?

[1] birch

[2] muddy

See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget?
Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past,
Thy image at our last embrace,—
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thick'ning green:
The fragrant birch and hawthorn hoar
Twin'd am'rous round the raptured scene;
The flow'rs sprang wanton to be prest,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till too, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaimed the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my mem'ry wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but th' impression deeper makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun,
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only love!
And fare thee weel awhile!
And I will come again, my love,
Tho' it were ten thousand mile.

I LOVE MY JEAN

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:

There wild woods grow, an' rivers row,
An' monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flow'rs,
I hear her sweet and fair;
I see her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:

There's not a bonnie flow'r that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

A RED, RED ROSE

My love is like a red, red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
My love is like the melodie,
That's sweetly played in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I;
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

BONNIE DOON

Ye flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause love was true.

Thou'lt break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wistna o' my fate.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine,
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Frae aff its thorny tree,
And my fause luver staw [1] the rose,
But left the thorn wi' me.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourish'd on the morn
And sae was pu'd ere noon.

O, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST

O, wert thou in the cauld blast
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee!
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'!

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there!
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen!

AE FOND KISS

Ae [2] fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, alas, forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love forever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka [3] joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, alas, forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

DUNCAN GRAY

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
On blithe Yule-night when we were fou', [4]
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!
Maggie coost [5] her head fu' high,
Looked asklent [6] and unco skeigh, [7]
Gart [8] poor Duncan stand abeigh; [9]
Ha, ha, the wooin o't!

Duncan fleeched, [10] and Duncan prayed;
Ha, ha, the wooin o't,
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't.

[1] stole
[2] one
[3] every
[4] full
[5] tossed
[6] sideways
[7] shy and skittish
[8] made
[9] off
[10] cajoled

Duncan sighed baith out and in,
Grat [1] his een [2] baith bleert [3] and blin',
Spak o' lowpin' [4] owre a linn: [5]
Ha, ha, the wooin o't.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't,
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
"Shall I, like a fool," quoth he,
"For a haughty hizzie [6] die?
She may gae to—France for me!"
Ha, ha, the wooin o't.

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't,
Meg grew sick as he grew well,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And oh, her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, the wooin o't.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't,
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, the wooin o't.
Duncan couldna be her death,
Swelling pity smoored [7] his wrath;
Now they're crouse [8] and canty [9] baith;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

AULD LANG SYNE

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

CHORUS

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans [10] fine;
But we've wandered monie a weary foot,
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't [11] i' the burn,[12]
Frae mornin' sun till dine; [13]
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
For auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,[14]
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie [15] waught,[16]
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,[17]
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

JOHN ANDERSON

John Anderson my jo,[18] John,
When we were first acquent,
Your locks were like the raven,
Your bonnie brow was brent; [19]
But now your brow is beld,[20] John,
Your locks are like the snaw;
But blessings on your frosty pow,[21]
John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson my jo, John,
We clamb the hill thegither,
And monie a canty [22] day, John,
We've had wi' ane anither:
Now we maun totter down, John,
And hand in hand we'll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my jo.

[1] wept
[2] eyes
[3] bleared
[4] leaping
[5] waterfall
[6] lass
[7] smothered
[8] cheerful
[9] happy
[10] daisies
[11] paddled
[12] brook
[13] noon
[14] comrade
[15] friendly
[16] draught
[17] pint-cup
[18] sweetheart
[19] smooth
[20] bald
[21] head
[22] happy

TAM GLEN

My heart is a-breaking, dear tittie,[1]
Some counsel unto me come len';
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic[2] a braw[3] fellow,
In poortith[4] I might mak a fen':[5]
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I mauna marry Tam Glen?

There's Lowrie, the laird o' Dumeller,
"Guid-day to you,"—brute! he comes ben:[6]
He brags and he blows o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie[7] does constantly deave[8] me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me;
But wha can think sae o' Tom Glen?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
He'll gie me guid hunder marks ten:
But, if it's ordained I maun take him,
O wha will I get but Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the valentine's dealing,
My heart to my mou'[9] gied a sten;[10]
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written, "Tam Glen!"

The last Halloween I was waukin'[11]
My droukit[12] sark-sleeve,[13] as ye ken:
His likeness cam up the house staukin',[14]
And the very gay breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come counsel, dear tittie, don't tarry;
I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
Gif ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

[1] sister
[2] such
[3] fine-looking
[4] poverty
[5] shift
[6] in
[7] mother
[8] deafen
[9] mouth
[10] leap
[11] watching
[12] drenched
[13] shirt-sleeve
[14] stalking

BRUCE TO HIS MEN AT BANNOCKBURN

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has often led,
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!
Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lour;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slavery!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!
Wha for Scotland's king and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!
Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!—
Let us do or die!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(1770–1850)

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR—JULY 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings, too,
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man

Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime,
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest friend,
My dear, dear friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold

Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshiper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

THREE YEARS SHE GREW

Three years she grew in sun and shower:
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute, insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see,
Even in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mold the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake.—The work was done.—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS

She dwelt among the untrodden ways
  Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise,
  And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
  Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
  Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
  When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
  The difference to me!

A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL

A slumber did my spirit seal;
  I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
  The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
  She neither hears nor sees;
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
  With rocks, and stones, and trees.

I TRAVELED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN

I traveled among unknown men,
  In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
  What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
  Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
  To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
  The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
  Beside an English fire.

Thy morning showed, thy nights concealed,
  The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine, too, is the last green field
  That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

MY HEART LEAPS UP

My heart leaps up when I behold
  A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began,
So is it now I am a man,
So be it when I shall grow old
  Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man:
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travelers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again!

Whate'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listen'd, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore
Long after it was heard no more.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food,
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveler between life and death:
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly plann'd
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

TO THE CUCKOO

O blithe new-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice:
O cuckoo! shall I call thee bird,
Or but a wandering voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the vale
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still long'd for, never seen!

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place,
That is fit home for thee!

TO THE DAISY

Her[1] divine skill taught me this,
That from everything I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling;
By a Daisy whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed;
Or a shady bush or tree;
She could more infuse in me,
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."

G. Wither.

In youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill, in discontent
Of pleasure high and turbulent,
  Most pleased when most uneasy;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake,
  Of thee, sweet daisy!

Thee winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few gray hairs;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
  That she may sun thee;
Whole summer fields are thine by right;
And autumn, melancholy wight!
Doth in thy crimson head delight
  When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveler in the lane;
Pleased at his greeting thee again;
  Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved, if thou be set at naught:
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
  When such are wanted.

Be violets in their sacred mews
The flowers the wanton zephyrs choose;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
  Her head impearling;
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
  The poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
  Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art!—a friend at hand, to scare
  His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
  Some apprehension;
Some steady love; some brief delight;
Some memory that had taken flight;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
  Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
  A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
  Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
  With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
  Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
  To thee am owing;

[1] his muse

An instinct call it, a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time;—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favorite.

THE DAFFODILS

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils,
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretch'd in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company!
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought;

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

TO THE SKYLARK

Ethereal minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam—
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free,
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eyes
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Ev'n now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried,
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control,
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance desires:
My hopes no more must change their name;
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with pain,
And fear, and bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate

Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable,—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest;
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire:
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
'Tis, finally, the man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
Plays in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpassed:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy warrior; this is he
That every man in arms should wish to be.

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;—
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong:
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy shepherd boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While earth herself is adorning
This sweet May-morning:
And the children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm:—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a tree, of many, one,
A single field which I have look'd upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind
And no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate, Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with new-learned art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the persons, down to palsied Age,
That life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep.
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the night
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest,
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither—
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We, in thought, will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquish'd one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret
Even more than when I tripp'd lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
Is lovely yet;

The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouch'd by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year,
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, Sept. 3, 1802

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning: silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theaters, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky,—
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

TO SLEEP

A flock of sheep that leisurely pass by
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees,
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees,
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

LONDON, 1802

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen

Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free;
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn,—
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations; how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold,—some fears unnamed
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

THE INNER VISION

Most sweet it is with unuplifted eyes
To pace the ground, if path be there or none,
While a fair region round the traveler lies
Which he forbears again to look upon;
Pleased rather with some soft ideal scene,
The work of fancy, or some happy tone
Of meditation, slipping in between
The beauty coming and the beauty gone.
—If thought and love desert us, from that day
Let us break off all commerce with the muse:
With thought and love companions of our way—
Whate'er the senses take or may refuse,—
The mind's internal heaven shall shed her dews
Of inspiration on the humblest lay.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON (1788–1824)

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art:
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consigned—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 't was trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard!—May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent.
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

STANZAS FOR MUSIC

I

There's not a joy the world can give like that it takes away,
When the glow of early thought declines in feeling's dull decay;
'Tis not on youth's smooth cheek the blush alone, which fades so fast,
But the tender bloom of heart is gone ere youth itself be past.

Then the few whose spirits float above the wreck of happiness
Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess:
The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain
The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.

Then the mortal coldness of the soul like death itself comes down;
It cannot feel for others' woes, it dare not dream its own;
That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears,
And though the eye may sparkle still, 'tis where the ice appears.

Though wit may flash from fluent lips, and mirth distract the breast,
Through midnight hours that yield no more their former hope of rest;
'Tis but as ivy-leaves around the ruined turret wreath,
All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and grey beneath.

Oh, could I feel as I have felt,—or be
what I have been,
Or weep as I could once have wept, o'er
many a vanished scene;
As springs in deserts found seem sweet,
all brackish though they be,
So, midst the wither'd waste of life, those
tears would flow to me.

II

There be none of Beauty's daughters
With a magic like thee;
And like music on the waters
Is thy sweet voice to me:
When, as if its sound were causing
The charmèd ocean's pausing,
The waves lie still and gleaming,
And the lulled winds seem dreaming.

And the midnight moon is weaving
Her bright chain o'er the deep;
Whose breast is gently heaving,
As an infant's asleep:
So the spirit bows before thee,
To listen and adore thee;
With a full but soft emotion,
Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

FARE THEE WELL

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And Constancy lives in realms above;
And Life is thorny; and youth is vain:
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain;
. . . . . .
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs, which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.
COLERIDGE'S *Christabel.*

Fare thee well! and if forever,
Still forever, fare *thee well:*
Even though unforgiving, never
'Gainst thee shall my heart rebel.

Would that breast were bared before thee
Where thy head so oft hath lain,
While that placid sleep came o'er thee
Which thou ne'er canst know again:

Would that breast, by thee glanced over,
Every inmost thought could show!
Then thou wouldst at last discover
'Twas not well to spurn it so.

Though the world for this commend
thee—
Though it smile upon the blow,
Even its praises must offend thee,
Founded on another's woe:

Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found,
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not;
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away:

Still thine own its life retaineth—
Still must mine, though bleeding, beat;
And the undying thought which paineth
Is—that we no more may meet.

These are words of deeper sorrow
Than the wail above the dead;
Both shall live, but every morrow
Wake us from a widowed bed.

And when thou would'st solace gather,
When our child's first accents flow,
Wilt thou teach her to say "Father!"
Though his care she must forego?

When her little hands shall press thee,
When her lip to thine is pressed,

Think of him whose prayer shall bless thee,
Think of him thy love *had* blessed!

Should her lineaments resemble
Those thou never more may'st see,
Then thy heart will softly tremble
With a pulse yet true to me.

All my faults perchance thou knowest,
All my madness none can know;
All my hopes, where'er thou goest,
Wither, yet with *thee* they go.

Every feeling hath been shaken;
Pride, which not a world could bow,
Bows to thee—by thee forsaken,
Even my soul forsakes me now:

But 'tis done—all words are idle—
Words from me are vainer still;
But the thoughts we cannot bridle
Force their way without the will.

Fare thee well!—thus disunited,
Torn from every nearer tie,
Seared in heart, and lone, and blighted,
More than this I scarce can die.

MAID OF ATHENS, ERE WE PART

Ζωή μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ.[1]

Maid of Athens, ere we part,
Give, oh give me back my heart!
Or, since that has left my breast,
Keep it now, and take the rest!
Hear my vow before I go,
Ζωή μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ.

By those tresses unconfined,
Woo'd by each Ægean wind;
By those lids whose jetty fringe
Kiss thy soft cheeks' blooming tinge;
By those wild eyes like the roe,
Ζωή μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ.

By that lip I long to taste;
By that zone-encircled waist;
By all the token-flowers that tell
What words can never speak so well;
By love's alternate joy and woe,
Ζωή μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ.

Maid of Athens! I am gone:
Think of me, sweet! when alone.
Though I fly to Istamboul,[2]
Athens holds my heart and soul:
Can I cease to love thee? No!
Ζωή μου, σᾶς ἀγαπῶ.

TO THOMAS MOORE

My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea;
But, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee!

Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were 't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be—peace with thine and mine,
And health to thee, Tom Moore.

ON THIS DAY I COMPLETE MY THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

Missolonghi, January 22, 1824

'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:

[1] My life, I love thee

[2] Constantinople

Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 't is not *thus*—and 't is not *here*—
Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor *now*,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
Awake, my spirit! Think through *whom*
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, *why live?*
The land of honorable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY
(1792–1822)

OZYMANDIAS

I met a traveler from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes! O thou
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and Preserver: Hear, oh hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of heaven and ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning! there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height—
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail, will burst: Oh hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: Oh hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than Thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seem'd a vision,—I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee—tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like wither'd leaves, to quicken a new birth;
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

THE INDIAN SERENADE

I arise from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low
And the stars are shining bright:
I arise from dreams of thee,
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how?
To thy chamber-window, Sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odors fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint
It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
O belovèd as thou art!

Oh lift me from the grass!
I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
My heart beats loud and fast;
Oh! press it close to thine again
Where it will break at last.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdain'd its brother:
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea—
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

LOVE'S LINGERING

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odors, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heap'd for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

THE FLIGHT OF LOVE

When the lamp is shatter'd
The light in the dust lies dead—
When the cloud is scatter'd,
The rainbow's glory is shed.
When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remember'd not;
When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute,
The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute—
No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruin'd cell,
Or the mournful surges
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

When hearts have once mingled,
Love first leaves the well-built nest;
The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possesst.
O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?

Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the ravens on high;
Bright reason will mock thee
Like the sun from a wintry sky.
From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds come.

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest,
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run,
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight
Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy shrill delight:

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see,—we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflow'd.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aerial hue
Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-wingéd thieves.

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymeneal
Or triumphal chant
Match'd with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt—
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest; but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream,
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate, and pride, and fear;
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then, as I am listening now!

THE CLOUD

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;

I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,—
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills;
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead,
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,
May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch through which I march
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

STANZAS WRITTEN IN DEJECTION NEAR NAPLES

The sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright,
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might:
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight—
The winds', the birds', the ocean-floods'—
The city's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

I see the deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore
Like light dissolved in star-showers thrown:
I sit upon the sands alone;
The lightning of the noon-tide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion—
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content, surpassing wealth,
The sage in meditation found,
And walk'd with inward glory crown'd—
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure;
Others I see whom these surround—
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

Yet now despair itself is mild
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne, and yet must bear,
Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I, when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament—for I am one
Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

A LAMENT

O World! O Life! O Time!
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before;
When will return the glory of your prime?
No more—Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight:

Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—Oh, never more!

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cool'd a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

III

Fadé far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmed darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows

The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast-fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—do I wake or sleep?

LINES ON THE MERMAID TAVERN

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?
Have ye tippled drink more fine
Than mine host's Canary wine?
Or are fruits of Paradise
Sweeter than those dainty pies
Of venison? O generous food!
Drest as though bold Robin Hood
Would, with his maid Marian,
Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
Mine host's sign-board flew away,
Nobody knew whither, till
An astrologer's old quill
To a sheepskin gave the story,
Said he saw you in your glory,
Underneath a new old sign
Sipping beverage divine,
And pledging with contented smack
The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
What Elysium have ye known,
Happy field or mossy cavern,
Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? what maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thus hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new.
More happy love! more happy, happy, love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or seashore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets forevermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

ODE TO AUTUMN

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For Summer has o'erbrimm'd their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cider-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings, hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river-sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

BARDS OF PASSION AND OF MIRTH

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Have ye souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new?
Yes, and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of sun and moon;
With the noise of fountain wond'rous
And the parle of voices thund'rous;
With the whisper of heaven's trees
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on Elysian lawns
Brows'd by none but Dian's fawns;
Underneath large blue-bells tented,
Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not;
Where the nightingale doth sing

Not a senseless, tranced thing,
But divine melodious truth;
Philosophic numbers smooth;
Tales and golden histories
Of heaven and its mysteries.

Thus ye live on high, and then
On the earth ye live again;
And the souls ye left behind you
Teach us, here, the way to find you,
Where your other souls are joying,
Never slumber'd, never cloying.
Here, your earth-born souls still speak
To mortals, of their little week;
Of their sorrows and delights;
Of their passions and their spites;
Of their glory and their shame;
What doth strengthen and what maim.
Thus ye teach us, every day,
Wisdom, though fled far away.

Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
Ye have left your souls on earth!
Ye have souls in heaven too,
Double-lived in regions new!

ROBIN HOOD

No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have Winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amaz'd to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale,
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grenè shawe;"
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his turfed grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—Strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is; yet let us sing
Honor to the old bow-string!
Honor to the bugle horn!
Honor to the woods unshorn!
Honor to the Lincoln green!
Honor to the archer keen!
Honor to tight Little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honor to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honor to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan!
Though their days have hurried by,
Let us two a burden try.

SONNETS

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travel'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;
That is the Grasshopper's—he takes the lead
In summer luxury,—he has never done
With his delights; for when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one, in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

WHEN I HAVE FEARS THAT I MAY CEASE TO BE

When I have fears that I may cease to be
Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
Before high-pilèd books, in charactery
Hold like rich garners the full-ripen'd grain;
When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
And think that I may never live to trace
Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance;
And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
That I shall never look upon thee more,
Never nave relish in the faery power
Of unreflecting love;—then on the shore
Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
Till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

TO ONE WHO HAS BEEN LONG IN CITY PENT

To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,—to breathe a prayer
Full in the smile of the blue firmament.
Who is more happy, when, with heart's content,
Fatigued he sinks into some pleasant lair
Of wavy grass, and reads a debonair
And gentle tale of love and languishment?
Returning home at evening, with an ear
Catching the notes of Philomel,—an eye
Watching the sailing cloudlet's bright career,
He mourns that day so soon has glided by:

E'en like the passage of an angel's tear
That falls through the clear ether silently.

BRIGHT STAR! WOULD I WERE STEADFAST AS THOU ART

Bright Star! would I were steadfast as
thou art—
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like Nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike
task
Of pure ablution round earth's human
shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the
moors:—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchange-
able,
Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening
breast
To feel forever its soft fall and swell,
Awake forever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever,—or else swoon to death.

NARRATIVE POETRY OF THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

Much admirable narrative poetry was written during the romantic period but most of it came from poets whose genius was essentially lyrical. Sir Walter Scott was the one story-teller of the group who did not intrude his own personality between the reader and the narrative; with him the story is the thing and we are scarcely conscious of him who relates it. In the narratives by other poets of the century, however, the poet himself is felt constantly. Byron is identified with his own hero; Wordsworth uses the story as a medium for interpreting life as he sees it, illustrating the power of nature over man; in Keats we are conscious of the poet's individualities of style and treatment.

The narratives here represented comprehend very different types of story. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* by Robert Burns is an idyll, a quiet tale of country life, as is *Michael* by William Wordsworth. Both are pictorial and reflective, the poet commenting upon what the story suggests to him. Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon* is not so much a story as it is a representation of the prisoner's emotions in different situations. The pictures are graphic, but most of all we are conscious of Byron's fiery love of liberty.

Christabel by S. T. Coleridge and *The Eve of St. Agnes* by John Keats take us away into the indefinite, picturesque past, with the lure of the atmosphere that spells romance. The narrative thread is just enough to bind together the series of highly colored pictures. The appeal is to the imagination through the senses. There is something of symbolism, or allegory, in *Christabel,* the two young women representing innocence and guilt respectively, but the story was never finished and the beauty, as is usual in romantic art, lies in the exquisite details rather than in the whole. Keats's poem is remarkable for the impression of purity it leaves, in spite of the warmth of its colorful imagery.

Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* is closer to the old epic. Scott is the great improviser of stories in verse and unfolds his tale with ease and charm. He writes, as Homer did, of men who achieved things, and recreates the past as a world of reality, not a beautiful shadowland. Although he lacked command of the subtleties of artistic versification, there is compensation in the vigor and sweep of his narrative, in his ability to make the past live again, and in his emphasis upon the qualities of good and gallant manhood.

ROBERT BURNS (1759–1796)

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

"Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor."
—*Gray.*

My lov'd, my honor'd, much-respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end;
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequestered scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways,
What Aiken in a cottage would have been:
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh; [1]
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh,[2]
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose;
The toil-worn cotter frae his labor goes,—
This night his weekly moil is at an end,—
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn [3] in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

[1] the sound made by the wind in the trees
[2] plow
[3] morrow

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee things, toddlin', stacher [4] through
To meet their dad wi' flichterin [5] noise and glee.
His wee bit ingle,[6] blinkin' bonnilie,
His clean hearthstane, his thriftie wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary kiaugh [7] and care beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil.

Belyve,[8] the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun':
Some ca' [9] the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie [10] errand to a neibor toun;
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparkling in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,
Or deposite her sair-won penny-fee,[11]
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

With joy unfeign'd, brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers: [12]
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos [13] that he sees or hears.

[4] stagger
[5] fluttering
[6] fireplace
[7] anxiety
[8] presently
[9] drive
[10] careful
[11] wages
[12] inquires
[13] odd bits of news

The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her shears,
Gars [1] auld claes look amaist as weel's the new—
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's and their mistress's command,
The younkers [2] a' are warnèd to obey;
And mind their labors wi' an eydent [3] hand,
And ne'er, though out o' sight, to jauk or play:
"And oh! be sure to fear the Lord alway!
And mind your duty, duly, morn and night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, what kens [4] the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neibor lad came o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy [5] her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck, anxious care inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins [6] is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben; [7]
A strappin' youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blithe Jenny sees the visit's no ill-ta'en;
The father cracks [8] of horses, pleughs, and kye.[9]
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But, blate [10] and laithfu',[11] scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' and sae grave;
Weel pleased to think her bairn's respected like the lave.[12]

Oh, happy love! where love like this is found!
Oh, heartfelt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare:—
If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the evening gale.

[1] makes
[2] youngsters
[3] diligent
[4] knows
[5] accompany
[6] partly
[7] in
[8] talks
[9] cows
[10] bashful
[11] shy
[12] rest

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch, a villain, lost to love and truth,
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honor, virtue, conscience, all exiled?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruined maid, and their distraction wild!

But now the supper crowns their simple board,—
The healsome parritch,[1] chief o' Scotia's food;
The soupe[2] their only hawkie[3] does afford,
That 'yont the hallan[4] snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth, in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck,[5] fell,[6]
And aft he's prest, and aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 't was a towmont[7] auld, sin' Lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, with patriarchal grace,
The big ha' Bible, ance his father's pride;
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets[8] wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales[9] a portion with judicious care,
And "Let us worship GOD!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive *Martyrs,* worthy of the name,
Or noble *Elgin* beets[10] the heavenward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickled ears no heartfelt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page—
How Abram was the friend of GOD on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

[1] porridge
[2] liquid, i.e., milk
[3] cow
[4] partition wall
[5] well preserved cheese
[6] strong
[7] twelve-month
[8] gray temples
[9] chooses
[10] incites

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme—
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed:
How He, who bore in heav'n the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by Heav'n's command.

Then kneeling down, to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
The Pow'r, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul;
And in His book of life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heav'n the warm request,
That He who stills the raven's clamorous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flowery pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad.
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"
And certes, in fair Virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind:
What is a lordling's pomp?—a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent,
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil

Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And oh! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That streamed through Wallace's undaunted heart,
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
Oh never, never, Scotia's realm desert;
But still the patriot, and the patriot bard,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH
(1770–1850)

MICHAEL

(*A Pastoral Poem*)

If from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you face to face.
But courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen: but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story, unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful poets who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveler to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains; he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed; which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which like a book preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less?—had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The son and father were come home, even then,
Their labor did not cease; unless when all

Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
And his old father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside; perhaps to card
Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found
And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year,
There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
Father and son, while far into the night
The housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the house itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named The Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the young one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his Shepherd's stool
Sat with a fettered sheep before him stretched,
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The Clipping Tree, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew up
A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect Shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock:
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this course not always, I believe,
Receiving from his father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his father's sight the boy grew up;
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had pressed upon him; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,

A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"
At this the old man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas: where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And at his birthplace built a chapel floored
With marble which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger,—but this hope is a good hope.

Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
If he *could go,* the boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy father he will die."
The youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Greenhead Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a sheepfold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old man spake to him:—
"My son,

To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories: 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune:
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old man grasped his hand
And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived,
As all their forefathers had done; and, when
At length their time was come, they were not loath
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou should'st live the life they lived,
But 'tis a long time to look back, my son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
It looks as if it never could endure
Another master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go."
At this the old man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my son,
It is a work for me. But lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, boy, be of good hope;—we both may live

To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part,
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee;
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his father had requested, laid
The first stone of the sheepfold. At the sight
The old man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that house in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell;—with morrow's dawn the boy
Began his journey, and, when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the sheepfold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame

Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart:
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud
And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
And for the land, his small inheritance.
And to the hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the sheepfold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time,
He at the building of this sheepfold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage which was named The Evening Star
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished sheepfold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE
(1772–1834)

CHRISTABEL

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION. 1816.

THE first part of the following poem was written in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in the year one thousand eight hundred, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than with the liveliness of a vision; I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year.

It is probable, that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second part had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present expect. But for this, I have only my own indolence to blame. The dates

are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is amongst us a set of critics, who seem to hold, that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank. I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages, or in the tone and the spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggerel version of two monkish Latin hexameters:—

> "'Tis mine and it is likewise yours;
> But an if this will not do,
> Let it be mine, dear friend! for I
> Am the poorer of the two."

I have only to add, that the meter of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle; namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition, in the nature of the imagery or passion.

PART THE FIRST

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock,
Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothèd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near, as near can be,
But what it is she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak,
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandal'd were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly!

"Mary mother, save me now!"
(Said Christabel,) "And who art thou?"

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
"Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:"
"Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!"
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

"My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white:
And once we crossed the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she,)
And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
"Oh well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose: and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
"All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,

And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth,
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
"Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!"
"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,
"I cannot speak for weariness."
So free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.
"O softly tread," said Christabel,
"My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?"
Christabel answered—"Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon with altered voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wildered you!"
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
"All they who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell,
Even I in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!"
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and froe,
That vain it were her lids to close:
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shuddered, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
Oh shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,

And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION
TO PART THE FIRST

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs,
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these charms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere?
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

PART THE SECOND

Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
Knells us back to a world of death.
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,

With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
Oh rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet; and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her locks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet,
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between:—
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side
He would proclaim it far and wide

With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they who thus had wronged the dame,
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spreads smiles like light!
With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.

Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine.
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp, and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.

And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:

And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And by mine honor! I will say,
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!—
—For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing!—
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warn'd by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.

"And in my dream, methought, I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stooped, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck,
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove's its head it crouched;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vowed this self-same day,
With music strong and saintly song
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
"Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!"
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine in maiden wise
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel—
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread,
At Christabel she look'd askance!—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shuddered aloud, with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,

And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind;
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!
And thus she stood in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance
With forced unconscious sympathy
Full before her father's view—
As far as such look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue!

And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly prayed:
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said: and more she could not say;
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'ermastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
O, by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died:
Prayed that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts like these had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild
Dishonored thus in his old age;
Dishonored by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION
TO PART THE SECOND

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks,
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832)

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

INTRODUCTION

The way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His withered cheek and tresses gray
Seemed to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.
The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppressed,
Wished to be with them and at rest.
No more on prancing palfrey borne,
He carolled, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caressed,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He poured, to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone;
A stranger filled the Stuarts' throne;
The bigots of the iron time
Had called his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorned and poor,
He begged his bread from door to door,
And turned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear.

He passed where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower:
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh.
With hesitating step at last
The embattled portal arch he passed,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft rolled back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.
The Duchess marked his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb!

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride;
And he began to talk anon
Of good Earl Francis, dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter, rest him God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode;
And how full many a tale he knew
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch:
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak,
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtained;
The aged Minstrel audience gained.
But when he reached the room of state
Where she with all her ladies sate,
Perchance he wished his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain,
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls;
He had played it to King Charles the Good[1]
When he kept court in Holyrood;

[1] Charles I

And much he wished, yet feared, to try
The long-forgotten melody.
Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face and smiled;
And lightened up his faded eye
With all a poet's ecstasy!
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot,
His toils, his wants, were all forgot;
Cold diffidence and age's frost
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

CANTO FIRST

I

The feast was over in Branksome tower,
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower,
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight and page and household squire
Loitered through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire:
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretched upon the rushy floor,
And urged in dreams the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;

Nine-and-twenty yeoman tall
Waited duteous on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword and spur on heel;
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest,
With corselet laced,
Pillowed on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barred.

V

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,[1]
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barded[2] with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome Hall.

VI

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?[3]
Why watch these warriors armed by night?
They watch to hear the bloodhound baying;
They watch to hear the war-horn braying;
To see Saint George's red cross streaming,
To see the midnight beacon gleaming;

[1] active
[2] protected
[3] decked

They watch against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop or Howard or Percy's powers
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth or Naworth or merry Carlisle.

VII

Such is the custom of Branksome Hall.
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell
How Lord Walter fell!
When startled burghers fled afar
The furies of the Border war,
When the streets of high Dunedin [1]
Saw lances gleam and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's [2] deadly yell,—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine
In mutual pilgrimage they drew,
Implored in vain the grace divine
For chiefs their own red falchions slew.
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughtered chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

IX

In sorrow o'er Lord Walter's bier
The warlike foresters had bent,
And many a flower and many a tear
Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent;
But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropped nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had locked the source of softer woe,
And burning pride and high disdain
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisped from the nurse's knee,
"And if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughtered sire
And wept in wild despair.
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied,
For hopeless love and anxious fear
Had lent their mingled tide;
Nor in her mother's altered eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover 'gainst her father's clan
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI

Of noble race the Ladye came;
Her father was a clerk [3] of fame,
Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learned the art that none may name
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery;
For when in studious mood he paced
Saint Andrew's [4] cloistered hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

[1] Edinburgh
[2] the war-cry of a Border clan
[3] scholar
[4] University of St. Andrew's

XII

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaur's[1] red side?
Is it the wind, that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turret round?

XIII

At the sullen, moaning sound
The ban-dogs[2] bay and howl,
And from the turrets round
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear!

XIV

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he called on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV

RIVER SPIRIT

"Sleep'st thou, brother?"

[1] a steep bank [2] watch-dogs

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

"Brother, nay—
On my hills the moonbeams play.
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morris[3] pacing,
To aërial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"

XVI

RIVER SPIRIT

"Tears of an imprisoned maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"

XVII

MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

"Arthur's slow wain[4] his course doth roll
In utter darkness round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim,
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;
Ill may I read their high decree:
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower
Till pride be quelled and love be free."

XVIII

The unearthly voices ceased,
And the heavy sound was still;
It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.

[3] morris-dance [4] The Great Dipper

But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
And her heart throbbed high with pride:
"Your mountains shall bend
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And with jocund din among them all
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper,[1] the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,
And round the hall right merrily
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts of rugged mould
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the gray warriors prophesied
How the brave boy in future war
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

XX

The Ladye forgot her purpose high
One moment and no more,
One moment gazed with a mother's eye
As she paused at the arched door;
Then from amid the armed train
She called to her William of Deloraine.

XXI

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he
As e'er couched Border lance by knee:
Through Solway Sands, through Tarras Moss,
Blindfold he knew the paths to cross;
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best bloodhounds;
In Eske or Liddel fords were none
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow or July's pride;
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight or matin prime:[2]
Steady of heart and stout of hand
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;
Five times outlawed had he been
By England's king and Scotland's queen.

XXII

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur nor stint to ride
Until thou come to Fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of Saint Mary's aisle.
Greet the father well from me;
Say that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be Saint Michael's night,
And though stars be dim the moon is bright,
And the cross of bloody red
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll or be it book,
Into it, knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn![3]
Better hadst thou ne'er been born!"

XXIV

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;

[1] border raider
[2] first hour of the day
[3] lost

Ere break of day," the warrior gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Were't my neck-verse [1] at Hairibee." [2]

XXV

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he passed,
Soon crossed the sounding barbican,[3]
And soon the Teviot side he won,
Eastward the wooded path he rode,
Green hazels o'er his basnet [4] nod;
He passed the Peel of Goldiland,
And crossed old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round:
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurred his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark:
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoined,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turned him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay
For many a mile the Roman way.

XXVII

A moment now he slacked his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed,
Drew saddle-girth and corselet-band,
And loosened in the sheath his brand.
On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint,
Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest
Where falcons hang their giddy nest
Mid cliffs from whence his eagle eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs which for many a later year
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove
Ambition is no cure for love.

XXVIII

Unchallenged, thence passed Deloraine
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come;
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow:
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded [5] from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemmed a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;
Yet, through good heart and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing-place.

XXX

Now Bowden Moor the march-man [6] won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,

[1] Beginning of 51st Psalm, "anciently read by criminals claiming benefit of clergy." (Scott)
[2] place of execution
[3] defence of the outer gate
[4] a form of helmet
[5] accoutred with armor
[6] borderer

As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallowed morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day;
When Home and Douglas in the van
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock with lichens gray,
Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he passed had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds[1] were in Melrose sung.
The sound upon the fitful gale
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp whose magic tone
Is wakened by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reached 'twas silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

Here paused the harp; and with its swell
The Master's fire and courage fell:
Dejectedly and low he bowed,
And, gazing timid on the crowd,
He seemed to seek in every eye
If they approved his minstrelsy;
And, diffident[2] of present praise,
Somewhat he spoke of former days,
And how old age and wandering long
Had done his hand and harp some wrong.
The Duchess, and her daughters fair,
And every gentle lady there,
Each after each, in due degree,
Gave praises to his melody;
His hand was true, his voice was clear,
And much they longed the rest to hear.
Encouraged thus, the aged man
After meet rest again began.

CANTO SECOND

I

If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright
Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
For the gay beams of lightsome day
Gild but to flout the ruins gray.
When the broken arches are black in night,
And each shafted oriel[3] glimmers white;
When the cold light's uncertain shower
Streams on the ruined central tower;
When buttress and buttress, alternately,
Seemed framed of ebon and ivory;
When silver edges the imagery,[4]
And the scrolls that teach thee to live and die;
When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
Then go—but go alone the while—
Then view Saint David's ruined pile;
And, home returning, soothly swear
Was never scene so sad and fair!

II

Short halt did Deloraine make there;
Little recked he of the scene so fair:
With dagger's hilt on the wicket strong
He struck full loud, and struck full long.
The porter hurried to the gate:
"Who knocks so loud, and knocks so late?"
"From Branksome I," the warrior cried;
And straight the wicket opened wide:
For Branksome's chiefs had in battle stood
To fence[5] the rights of fair Melrose;

[1] midnight church service [2] distrustful
[3] bay window [4] carved figures
[5] defend

And lands and livings, many a rood,
Had gifted the shrine for their souls' repose.

III

Bold Deloraine his errand said;
The porter bent his humble head;
With torch in hand, and feet unshod,
And noiseless step, the path he trod:
The arched cloister, far and wide,
Rang to the warrior's clanking stride,
Till, stooping low his lofty crest,
He entered the cell of the ancient priest,
And lifted his barred aventayle,[1]
To hail the Monk of Saint Mary's aisle.

IV

"The Ladye of Branksome greets thee by me,
Says that the fated hour is come,
And that to-night I shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb."
From sackcloth couch the monk arose,
With toil his stiffened limbs he reared;
A hundred years had flung their snows
On his thin locks and floating beard.

V

And strangely on the knight looked he,
And his blue eyes gleamed wild and wide:
"And darest thou, warrior, seek to see
What heaven and hell alike would hide?
My breast in belt of iron pent,
With shirt of hair and scourge of thorn,
For threescore years, in penance spent,
My knees those flinty stones have worn;
Yet all too little to atone
For knowing what should ne'er be known.
Wouldst thou thy every future year
In ceaseless prayer and penance drie,[2]
Yet wait thy latter end with fear—
Then, daring warrior, follow me!"

[1] visor of helmet [2] endure

VI

"Penance, father, will I none;
Prayer know I hardly one;
For mass or prayer can I rarely tarry,
Save to patter an Ave Mary,
When I ride on a Border foray.
Other prayer can I none;
So speed me my errand, and let me be gone."

VII

Again on the knight looked the churchman old,
And again he sighed heavily;
For he had himself been a warrior bold,
And fought in Spain and Italy.
And he thought on the days that were long since by,
When his limbs were strong and his courage was high
Now, slow and faint, he led the way
Where, cloistered round, the garden lay;
The pillared arches were over their head,
And beneath their feet were the bones of the dead.

VIII

Spreading herbs and flowerets bright
Glisten with the dew of night;
Nor herb nor floweret glistened there
But was carved in the cloister-arches as fair.
The monk gazed long on the lovely moon,
Then into the night he looked forth;
And red and bright the streamers light
Were dancing in the glowing north.
So had he seen, in fair Castile,
The youth in glittering squadrons start,
Sudden the flying jennet[3] wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart.
He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.

[3] small Spanish horse

IX

By a steel-clenched postern door
They entered now the chancel tall;
The darkened roof rose high aloof
On pillars lofty and light and small:
The keystone that locked each ribbed aisle
Was a fleur-de-lys or a quatre-feuille;
The corbels were carved grotesque and grim;
And the pillars, with clustered shafts so trim,
With base and with capital flourished around,
Seemed bundles of lances which garlands had bound.

X

Full many a scutcheon and banner riven
Shook to the cold night-wind of heaven,
Around the screened altar's pale;
And there the dying lamps did burn
Before thy low and lonely urn,
O gallant Chief of Otterburne!
And thine, dark Knight of Liddesdale!
O fading honors of the dead!
O high ambition lowly laid!

XI

The moon on the east oriel shone
Through slender shafts of shapely stone,
By foliaged tracery combined;
Thou wouldst have thought some fairy's hand
'Twixt poplars straight the osier wand
In many a freakish knot had twined,
Then framed a spell when the work was done,
And changed the willow wreaths to stone.
The silver light, so pale and faint,
Showed many a prophet and many a saint,
Whose image on the glass was dyed;
Full in the midst, his cross of red
Triumphant Michael brandished,
And trampled the Apostate's pride.
The moonbeam kissed the holy pane,
And threw on the pavement a bloody stain.

XII

They sate them down on a marble stone—
A Scottish monarch slept below;
Thus spoke the monk in solemn tone:
"I was not always a man of woe;
For Paynim countries I have trod,
And fought beneath the Cross of God:
Now, strange to my eyes thine arms appear,
And their iron clang sounds strange to my ear.

XIII

"In these far climes it was my lot
To meet the wondrous Michael Scott;
A wizard of such dreaded fame
That when, in Salamanca's [1] cave,
Him listed his magic wand to wave,
The bells would ring in Notre Dame!
Some of his skill he taught to me;
And, warrior, I could say to thee
The words that cleft Eildon Hills in three,
And bridled the Tweed with a curb of stone:
But to speak them were a deadly sin,
And for having but thought them my heart within
A treble penance must be done.

XIV

"When Michael lay on his dying bed,
His conscience was awakened;
He bethought him of his sinful deed,
And he gave me a sign to come with speed:
I was in Spain when the morning rose,
But I stood by his bed ere evening close.
The words may not again be said
That he spoke to me, on death-bed laid;

[1] in Spain

They would rend this Abbaye's massy nave,
And pile it in heaps above his grave.

XV

"I swore to bury his Mighty Book,
That never mortal might therein look;
And never to tell where it was hid,
Save at his Chief of Branksome's need;
And when that need was past and o'er,
Again the volume to restore.
I buried him on Saint Michael's night,
When the bell tolled one and the moon was bright,
And I dug his chamber among the dead,
When the floor of the chancel was stained red,
That his patron's cross might over him wave,
And scare the fiends from the wizard's grave.

XVI

"It was a night of woe and dread
When Michael in the tomb I laid;
Strange sounds along the chancel passed,
The banners waved without a blast"—
Still spoke the monk, when the bell tolled one!—
"I tell you, that a braver man
Than William of Deloraine, good at need,
Against a foe ne'er spurred a steed;
Yet somewhat was he chilled with dread,
And his hair did bristle upon his head.

XVII

"Lo, warrior! now, the cross of red
Points to the grave of the mighty dead:
Within it burns a wondrous light,
To chase the spirits that love the night;
That lamp shall burn unquenchably,
Until the eternal doom shall be."
Slow moved the monk to the broad flagstone
Which the bloody cross was traced upon:
He pointed to a secret nook;
An iron bar the warrior took;
And the monk made a sign with his withered hand,
The grave's huge portal to expand.

XVIII

With beating heart to the task he went,
His sinewy frame o'er the gravestone bent,
With bar of iron heaved amain
Till the toil-drops fell from his brows like rain.
It was by dint of passing [1] strength
That he moved the massy stone at length.
I would you had been there to see
How the light broke forth so gloriously,
Streamed upward to the chancel roof,
And through the galleries far aloof!
No earthly flame blazed e'er so bright;
It shone like heaven's own blessed light,
And, issuing from the tomb,
Showed the monk's cowl and visage pale,
Danced on the dark-browed warrior's mail,
And kissed his waving plume.

XIX

Before their eyes the wizard lay,
As if he had not been dead a day.
His hoary beard in silver rolled,
He seemed some seventy winters old;
A palmer's [2] amice [3] wrapped him round,
With a wrought Spanish baldric [4] bound,
Like a pilgrim from beyond the sea:
His left hand held his Book of Might,
A silver cross was in his right;
The lamp was placed beside his knee.
High and majestic was his look,
At which the fellest fiends had shook,
And all unruffled was his face:
They trusted his soul had gotten grace.

[1] surpassing
[2] pilgrim
[3] a flowing cloak
[4] belt

XX

Often had William of Deloraine
Rode through the battle's bloody plain,
And trampled down the warriors slain,
And neither known remorse nor awe,
Yet now remorse and awe he owned;
His breath came thick, his head swam round,
When this strange scene of death he saw.
Bewildered and unnerved he stood,
And the priest prayed fervently and loud:
With eyes averted prayed he;
He might not endure the sight to see
Of the man he had loved so brotherly.

XXI

And when the priest his death-prayer had prayed,
Thus unto Deloraine he said:
"Now, speed thee what thou hast to do,
Or, warrior, we may dearly rue;
For those thou mayst not look upon
Are gathering fast round the yawning stone!"
Then Deloraine in terror took
From the cold hand the Mighty Book,
With iron clasped and with iron bound:
He thought, as he took it, the dead man frowned;
But the glare of the sepulchral light,
Perchance, had dazzled the warrior's sight.

XXII

When the huge stone sunk o'er the tomb
The night returned in double gloom,
For the moon had gone down and the stars were few;
And as the knight and priest withdrew,
With wavering steps and dizzy brain,
They hardly might the postern gain.
'Tis said, as through the aisles they passed,
They heard strange noises on the blast;
And through the cloister-galleries small,
Which at mid-height thread the chancel wall,
Loud sobs, and laughter louder, ran,
And voices unlike the voice of man,
As if the fiends kept holiday
Because these spells were brought to day.
I cannot tell how the truth may be;
I say the tale as 'twas said to me.

XXIII

"Now, hie thee hence," the Father said,
"And when we are on death-bed laid,
O may our dear Ladye and sweet Saint John
Forgive our souls for the deed we have done!"
The monk returned him to his cell,
And many a prayer and penance sped; [1]
When the convent met at the noontide bell,
The Monk of Saint Mary's aisle was dead!
Before the cross was the body laid,
With hands clasped fast, as if still he prayed.

XXIV

The knight breathed free in the morning wind,
And strove his hardihood to find:
He was glad when he passed the tomb-stones gray
Which girdle round the fair Abbaye;
For the mystic book, to his bosom pressed,
Felt like a load upon his breast,
And his joints, with nerves of iron twined,
Shook like the aspen-leaves in wind.
Full fain was he when the dawn of day
Began to brighten Cheviot gray;
He joyed to see the cheerful light,
And he said Ave Mary as well as he might.

[1] hurried through

XXV

The sun had brightened Cheviot gray,
The sun had brightened the Carter's side;
And soon beneath the rising day
Smiled Branksome towers and Teviot's tide.
The wild birds told their warbling tale,
And wakened every flower that blows;
And peeped forth the violet pale,
And spread her breast the mountain rose.
And lovelier than the rose so red,
Yet paler than the violet pale,
She early left her sleepless bed,
The fairest maid of Teviotdale.

XXVI

Why does fair Margaret so early awake,
And don her kirtle [1] so hastilie;
And the silken knots, which in hurry she would make,
Why tremble her slender fingers to tie?
Why does she stop and look often around,
As she glides down the secret stair;
And why does she pat the shaggy blood-hound,
As he rouses him up from his lair;
And, though she passes the postern alone,
Why is not the watchman's bugle blown?

XXVII

The Ladye steps in doubt and dread
Lest her watchful mother hear her tread;
The Ladye caresses the rough bloodhound
Lest his voice should waken the castle round;
The watchman's bugle is not blown
For he was her foster-father's son;
And she glides through the greenwood at dawn of light
To meet Baron Henry, her own true knight.

XXVIII

The knight and Ladye fair are met,
And under the hawthorn's boughs are set.
A fairer pair were never seen
To meet beneath the hawthorn green.
He was stately and young and tall,
Dreaded in battle and loved in hall;
And she, when love, scarce told, scarce hid,
Lent to her cheek a livelier red,
When the half sigh her swelling breast
Against the silken ribbon pressed,
When her blue eyes their secret told,
Though shaded by her locks of gold—
Where would you find the peerless fair
With Margaret of Branksome might compare!

XXIX

And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy;
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow.
Ye ween to hear a melting tale
Of two true lovers in a dale;
And how the knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove,
Swore he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love;
And how she blushed, and how she sighed,
And, half consenting, half denied,
And said that she would die a maid;—
Yet, might the bloody feud be stayed,
Henry of Cranstoun, and only he,
Margaret of Branksome's choice should be.

XXX

Alas! fair dames, your hopes are vain!
My harp has lost the enchanting strain;
Its lightness would my age reprove:
My hairs are gray, my limbs are old,
My heart is dead, my veins are cold:
I may not, must not, sing of love.

[1] gown

XXXI

Beneath an oak, mossed o'er by eld,
The Baron's dwarf his courser held,
And held his crested helm and spear:
That dwarf was scarce an earthly man,
If the tales were true that of him ran
Through all the Border far and near.
'Twas said, when the Baron a-hunting rode
Through Reedsdale's glens, but rarely trod,
He heard a voice cry, "Lost! lost! lost!"
And, like tennis-ball by racket tossed,
A leap of thirty feet and three
Made from the gorse this elfin shape,
Distorted like some dwarfish ape,
And lighted at Lord Cranstoun's knee,
Lord Cranstoun was some whit[1] dismayed;
'Tis said that five good miles he rade,
To rid him of his company;
But where he rode one mile, the dwarf ran four,
And the dwarf was first at the castle door.

XXXII

Use lessens marvel, it is said:
This elfish dwarf with the Baron stayed;
Little he ate, and less he spoke,
Nor mingled with the menial flock;
And oft apart his arms he tossed,
And often muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"
He was waspish, arch, and litherlie,[2]
But well Lord Cranstoun served he:
And he of his service was full fain;
For once he had been ta'en or slain,
An it had not been for his ministry.
All between Home and Hermitage
Talked of Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIII

For the Baron went on pilgrimage,
And took with him this elfish page,
To Mary's Chapel of the Lowes;
For there, beside Our Ladye's lake,
An offering he had sworn to make,
And he would pay his vows.
But the Ladye of Branksome gathered a band
Of the best that would ride at her command;
The trysting-place was Newark Lee.
Wat of Harden came thither amain,
And thither came John of Thirlestane,
And thither came William of Deloraine;
They were three hundred spears and three.
Through Douglas-burn, up Yarrow stream,
Their horses prance, their lances gleam.
They came to Saint Mary's lake ere day,
But the chapel was void and the Baron away.
They burned the chapel for very rage,
And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin Page.

XXXIV

And now, in Branksome's good greenwood,
As under the aged oak he stood,
The Baron's courser pricks his ears,
As if a distant noise he hears.
The dwarf waves his long lean arm on high,
And signs to the lovers to part and fly;
No time was then to vow or sigh.
Fair Margaret through the hazel-grove
Flew like the startled cushat-dove;[3]
The dwarf the stirrup held and rein;
Vaulted the knight on his steed amain,
And, pondering deep that morning's scene,
Rode eastward through the hawthorns green.

While thus he poured the lengthened tale,
The Minstrel's voice began to fail,

[1] somewhat [2] mischievous [3] wood-pigeon

Full slyly smiled the observant page,
And gave the withered hand of age
A goblet, crowned with mighty wine,
The blood of Velez'[1] scorched vine.
He raised the silver cup on high,
And, while the big drop filled his eye,
Prayed God to bless the Duchess long,
And all who cheered a son of song.
The attending maidens smiled to see
How long, how deep, how zealously,
The precious juice the Minstrel quaffed;
And he, emboldened by the draught,
Looked gayly back to them and laughed.
The cordial nectar of the bowl
Swelled his old veins and cheered his soul;
A lighter, livelier prelude ran,
Ere thus his tale again began.

CANTO THIRD

I

And said I that my limbs were old,
And said I that my blood was cold,
And that my kindly fire was fled,
And my poor withered heart was dead,
And that I might not sing of love?—
How could I to the dearest theme
That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
So foul, so false a recreant prove!
How could I name love's very name,
Nor wake my heart to notes of flame!

II

In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed;
In war, he mounts the warrior's steed;
In halls, in gay attire is seen;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love.

[1] A town in Spain.

III

So thought Lord Cranstoun, as I ween,
While, pondering deep the tender scene,
He rode through Branksome's hawthorn green.
But the page shouted wild and shrill,
And scarce his helmet could he don,
When downward from the shady hill
A stately knight came pricking on.[2]
That warrior's steed, so dapple-gray,
Was dark with sweat and splashed with clay,
His armor red with many a stain:
He seemed in such a weary plight,
As if he had ridden the livelong night;
For it was William of Deloraine.

IV

But no whit weary did he seem,
When, dancing in the sunny beam,
He marked the crane on the Baron's crest;
For his ready spear was in his rest.
Few were the words, and stern and high,
That marked the foemen's feudal hate;
For question fierce and proud reply
Gave signal soon of dire debate.
Their very coursers seemed to know
That each was other's mortal foe,
And snorted fire when wheeled around
To give each knight his vantage-ground.

V

In rapid round the Baron bent;
He sighed a sigh and prayed a prayer;
The prayer was to his patron saint,
The sigh was to his ladye fair.
Stout Deloraine nor sighed nor prayed,
Nor saint, nor ladye, called to aid;
But he stooped his head, and couched his spear,
And spurred his steed to full career.
The meeting of these champions proud
Seemed like the bursting thunder-cloud.

[2] spurring

VI

Stern was the dint the Borderer lent!
The stately Baron backwards bent,
Bent backwards to his horse's tail,
And his plumes went scattering on the gale;
The tough ash spear, so stout and true,
Into a thousand flinders flew.
But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
Through shield and jack[1] and acton[2] passed,
Deep in his bosom broke at last.
Still sate the warrior saddle-fast,
Till, stumbling in the mortal shock,
Down went the steed, the girthing broke,
Hurled on a heap lay man and horse.
The Baron onward passed his course,
Nor knew—so giddy rolled his brain—
His foe lay stretched upon the plain.

VII

But when he reined his courser round,
And saw his foeman on the ground
Lie senseless as the bloody clay,
He bade his page to stanch the wound,
And there beside the warrior stay,
And tend him in his doubtful state,
And lead him to Branksome castle-gate:
His noble mind was inly moved
For the kinsman of the maid he loved.
"This shalt thou do without delay:
No longer here myself may stay;
Unless the swifter I speed away,
Short shrift[3] will be at my dying day."

VIII

Away in speed Lord Cranstoun rode;
The Goblin Page behind abode;
His lord's command he ne'er withstood,
Though small his pleasure to do good.
As the corselet off he took,
The dwarf espied the Mighty Book!
Much he marveled a knight of pride
Like a book-bosomed priest should ride:
He thought not to search or stanch the wound
Until the secret he had found.

IX

The iron band, the iron clasp,
Resisted long the elfin grasp;
For when the first he had undone,
It closed as he the next begun.
Those iron clasps, that iron band,
Would not yield to unchristened hand
Till he smeared the cover o'er
With the Borderer's curdled gore;
A moment then the volume spread,
And one short spell therein he read.
It had much of glamor might,
Could make a ladye seem a knight,
The cobwebs on a dungeon wall
Seem tapestry in lordly hall,
A nutshell seem a gilded barge,
A sheeling[4] seem a palace large,
And youth seem age, and age seem youth—
All was delusion, nought was truth.

X

He had not read another spell,
When on his cheek a buffet fell,
So fierce, it stretched him on the plain
Beside the wounded Deloraine.
From the ground he rose dismayed,
And shook his huge and matted head;
One word he muttered and no more,
"Man of age, thou smitest sore!"
No more the elfin page durst try
Into the wondrous book to pry;
The clasps, though smeared with Christian gore,
Shut faster than they were before.

[1] A jacket institched with pieces of iron.
[2] An undergarment made of buckram.
[3] time for confession
[4] hut

He hid it underneath his cloak.—
Now, if you ask who gave the stroke,
I cannot tell, so mot [1] I thrive;
It was not given by man alive.

XI

Unwillingly himself he addressed
To do his master's high behest:
He lifted up the living corse,
And laid it on the weary horse;
He led him into Branksome Hall
Before the beards of the warders all,
And each did after swear and say
There only passed a wain of hay.
He took him to Lord David's tower,
Even to the Ladye's secret bower;
And, but that stronger spells were spread,
And the door might not be opened,
He had laid him on her very bed.
Whate'er he did of gramarye [2]
Was always done maliciously;
He flung the warrior on the ground,
And the blood welled freshly from the wound.

XII

As he repassed the outer court,
He spied the fair young child at sport:
He thought to train [3] him to the wood;
For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good.
Seemed to the boy some comrade gay
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out.

XIII

He led the boy o'er bank and fell,
Until they came to a woodland brook;
The running stream dissolved the spell,
And his own elfish shape he took.

[1] may
[2] magic
[3] entice

Could he have had his pleasure vilde,[4]
He had crippled the joints of the noble child,
Or, with his fingers long and lean,
Had strangled him in fiendish spleen:
But his awful mother he had in dread,
And also his power was limited;
So he but scowled on the startled child,
And darted through the forest wild;
The woodland brook he bounding crossed,
And laughed, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"

XIV

Full sore amazed at the wondrous change,
And frightened, as a child might be,
At the wild yell and visage strange,
And the dark words of gramarye,
The child, amidst the forest bower,
Stood rooted like a lily flower;
And when at length, with trembling pace,
He sought to find where Branksome lay,
He feared to see that grisly [5] face
Glare from some thicket on his way.
Thus, starting oft, he journeyed on,
And deeper in the wood is gone,—
For aye the more he sought his way,
The farther still he went astray,—
Until he heard the mountains round
Ring to the baying of a hound.

XV

And hark! and hark! the deep-mouthed bark
Comes nigher still and nigher;
Bursts on the path a dark bloodhound,
His tawny muzzle tracked the ground,
And his red eye shot fire.
Soon as the wildered child saw he,
He flew at him right furiouslie.
I ween you would have seen with joy
The bearing of the gallant boy,

[4] vile
[5] grim

When, worthy of his noble sire,
His wet cheek glowed 'twixt fear and ire!
He faced the bloodhound manfully,
And held his little bat on high;
So fierce he struck, the dog, afraid,
At cautious distance hoarsely bayed,
But still in act to spring;
When dashed an archer through the glade,
And when he saw the hound was stayed,
He drew his tough bowstring;
But a rough voice cried, "Shoot not, hoy!
Ho! shoot not, Edward,—'tis a boy!"

XVI

The speaker issued from the wood,
And checked his fellow's surly mood,
And quelled the ban-dog's ire:
He was an English yeoman good
And born in Lancashire.
Well could he hit a fallow-deer
Five hundred feet him fro;
With hand more true and eye more clear
No archer bended bow.
His coal-black hair, shorn round and close,
Set off his sun-burned face;
Old England's sign, Saint George's cross,
His barret-cap[1] did grace;
His bugle-horn hung by his side,
All in a wolf-skin baldric tied;
And his short falchion, sharp and clear,
Had pierced the throat of many a deer.

XVII

His kirtle, made of forest green,
Reached scantly to his knee;
And, at his belt, of arrows keen
A furbished sheaf bore he;
His buckler scarce in breadth a span,
No longer fence had he;
He never counted him a man,
Would strike below the knee:
His slackened bow was in his hand,
And the leash that was his bloodhound's band.

XVIII

He would not do the fair child harm,
But held him with his powerful arm,
That he might neither fight nor flee;
For when the red cross spied he,
The boy strove long and violently.
"Now, by Saint George," the archer cries,
"Edward, methinks we have a prize!
This boy's fair face and courage free
Show he is come of high degree."

XIX

"Yes! I am come of high degree,
For I am the heir of bold Buccleuch;
And, if thou dost not set me free,
False Southron, thou shalt dearly rue!
For Walter of Harden shall come with speed,
And William of Deloraine, good at need,
And every Scot from Esk to Tweed;
And, if thou dost not let me go,
Despite thy arrows and thy bow,
I'll have thee hanged to feed the crow!"

XX

"Gramercy for thy good-will, fair boy!
My mind was never set so high;
But if thou art chief of such a clan,
And art the son of such a man,
And ever comest to thy command,
Our wardens had need to keep good order:
My bow of yew to a hazel wand,
Thou'lt make them work upon the Border!
Meantime, be pleased to come with me,
For good Lord Dacre shalt thou see;
I think our work is well begun,
When we have taken thy father's son."

[1] cloth cap

XXI

Although the child was led away,
In Branksome still he seemed to stay,
For so the Dwarf his part did play;
And, in the shape of that young boy,
He wrought the castle much annoy.
The comrades of the young Buccleuch
He pinched and beat and overthrew;
Nay, some of them he well-nigh slew.
He tore Dame Maudlin's silken tire,[1]
And, as Sym Hall stood by the fire,
He lighted the match of his bandelier,[2]
And wofully scorched the hackbuteer.[3]
It may be hardly thought or said,
The mischief that the urchin made,
Till many of the castle guessed
That the young baron was possessed!

XXII

Well I ween the charm he held
The noble Ladye had soon dispelled,
But she was deeply busied then
To tend the wounded Deloraine.
Much she wondered to find him lie
On the stone threshold stretched along:
She thought some spirit of the sky
Had done the bold moss-trooper wrong,
Because, despite her precept dread,
Perchance he in the book had read;
But the broken lance in his bosom stood,
And it was earthly steel and wood.

XXIII

She drew the splinter from the wound,
And with a charm she stanched the blood.
She bade the gash be cleansed and bound:
No longer by his couch she stood;
But she has ta'en the broken lance,
And washed it from the clotted gore,
And salved the splinter o'er and o'er.
William of Deloraine, in trance,
Whene'er she turned it round and round,
Twisted as if she galled his wound.
Then to her maidens she did say,
That he should be whole man and sound
Within the course of a night and day.
Full long she toiled, for she did rue
Mishap to friend so stout and true.

XXIV

So passed the day—the evening fell,
'Twas near the time of curfew bell;
The air was mild, the wind was calm,
The stream was smooth, the dew was balm;
E'en the rude watchman on the tower
Enjoyed and blessed the lovely hour.
Far more fair Margaret loved and blessed
The hour of silence and of rest.
On the high turret sitting lone,
She waked at times the lute's soft tone,
Touched a wild note, and all between
Thought of the bower of hawthorns green.
Her golden hair streamed free from band,
Her fair cheek rested on her hand,
Her blue eyes sought the west afar,
For lovers love the western star.

XXV

Is yon the star, o'er Penchryst Pen,
That rises slowly to her ken,
And, spreading broad its wavering light,
Shakes its loose tresses on the night?
Is yon red glare the western star? —
O, 'tis the beacon-blaze of war!
Scarce could she draw her tightened breath,
For well she knew the fire of death!

XXVI

The warder viewed it blazing strong,
And blew his war-note loud and long,
Till, at the high and haughty sound,
Rock, wood, and river rung around.
The blast alarmed the festal hall,
And startled forth the warriors all;

[1] head-dress
[2] ammunition belt
[3] musketeer

Far downward in the castle-yard
Full many a torch and cresset [1] glared,
And helms and plumes, confusedly tossed,
Were in the blaze half seen, half lost;
And spears in wild disorder shook,
Like reeds beside a frozen brook.

XXVII

The seneschal, whose silver hair
Was reddened by the torches' glare,
Stood in the midst, with gesture proud,
And issued forth his mandates loud:
"On Penchryst glows a bale [2] of fire,
And three are kindling on Priesthaughs-
wire;
Ride out, ride out,
The foe to scout!
Mount, mount for Branksome, every
man!
Thou, Todrig, warn the Johnstone clan,
That ever are true and stout.
Ye need not send to Liddesdale,
For when they see the blazing bale
Elliots and Armstrongs never fail.—
Ride, Alton, ride, for death and life,
And warn the warder of the strife!—
Young Gilbert, let our beacon blaze,
Our kin and clan and friends to raise!"

XXVIII

Fair Margaret from the turret head
Heard far below the coursers' tread,
While loud the harness rung,
As to their seats with clamor dread
The ready horsemen sprung:
And trampling hoofs, and iron coats,
And leaders' voices, mingled notes
And out! and out!
In hasty rout,
The horsemen galloped forth;
Dispersing to the south to scout,
And east, and west, and north,
To view their coming enemies,
And warn their vassals and allies.

[1] light on a pole [2] beacon

XXIX

The ready page with hurried hand
Awaked the need-fire's [3] slumbering
brand,
And ruddy blushed the heaven;
For a sheet of flame from the turret high
Waved like a blood-flag on the sky,
All flaring and uneven.
And soon a score of fires, I ween,
From height and hill and cliff were seen,
Each with warlike tidings fraught;
Each from each the signal caught;
Each after each they glanced to sight,
As stars arise upon the night.
They gleamed on many a dusky tarn,[4]
Haunted by the lonely earn; [5]
On many a cairn's gray pyramid,
Where urns of mighty chiefs lie hid;
Till high Dunedin the blazes saw
From Soltra and Dumpender Law,
And Lothian heard the Regent's order
That all should bowne [6] them for the
Border.

XXX

The livelong night in Branksome rang
The ceaseless sound of steel;
The castle-bell with backward clang
Sent forth the larum peal.
Was frequent heard the heavy jar,
Where massy stone and iron bar
Were piled on echoing keep and tower,
To whelm the foe with deadly shower;
Was frequent heard the changing guard,
And watchword from the sleepless ward;
While, wearied by the endless din,
Bloodhound and ban-dog yelled within.

XXXI

The noble dame, amid the broil,
Shared the gray seneschal's high toil,

[3] beacon [5] eagle
[4] mountain lake [6] make ready

And spoke of danger with a smile,
Cheered the young knights, and council sage
Held with the chiefs of riper age.
No tidings of the foe were brought,
Nor of his numbers knew they aught,
Nor what in time of truce he sought.
Some said that there were thousands ten;
And others weened that it was nought
But Leven Clans or Tynedale men,
Who came to gather in black-mail;
And Liddesdale, with small avail,
Might drive them lightly back agen.
So passed the anxious night away,
And welcome was the peep of day.

Ceased the high sound—the listening throng
Applaud the Master of the Song;
And marvel much, in helpless age,
So hard should be his pilgrimage.
Had he no friend, no daughter dear,
His wandering toil to share and cheer?
No son to be his father's stay,
And guide him on the rugged way?
"Ay, once he had—but he was dead!"—
Upon the harp he stooped his head,
And busied himself the strings withal,
To hide the tear that fain would fall.
In solemn measure, soft and slow,
Arose a father's notes of woe.

CANTO FOURTH

I

Sweet Teviot! on thy silver tide
The glaring bale-fires blaze no more;
No longer steel-clad warriors ride
Along thy wild and willowed shore;
Where'er thou wind'st, by dale or hill,
All, all is peaceful, all is still,
As if thy waves, since time was born,
Since first they rolled upon the Tweed,
Had only heard the shepherd's reed,
Nor startled at the bugle-horn.

II

Unlike the tide of human time,
Which, though it change in ceaseless flow,
Retains each grief, retains each crime,
Its earliest course was doomed to know,
And, darker as it downward bears,
Is stained with past and present tears.
Low as that tide has ebbed with me,
It still reflects to memory's eye
The hour my brave, my only boy
Fell by the side of great Dundee.
Why, when the volleying musket played
Against the bloody Highland blade,
Why was not I beside him laid?—
Enough—he died the death of fame;
Enough—he died with conquering Græme.

III

Now over Border dale and fell
Full wide and far was terror spread;
For pathless marsh and mountain cell
The peasant left his lowly shed.
The frightened flocks and herds were pent
Beneath the peel's[1] rude battlement;
And maids and matrons dropped the tear,
While ready warriors seized the spear.
From Branksome's towers the watchman's eye
Dun wreaths of distant smoke can spy,
Which, curling in the rising sun,
Showed southern ravage was begun.

IV

Now loud the heedful gate-ward cried:
"Prepare ye all for blows and blood!
Watt Tinlinn, from the Liddel-side,
Comes wading through the flood.
Full oft the Tynedale snatchers knock
At his lone gate and prove the lock;

[1] tower's

It was but last Saint Barnabright [1]
They sieged him a whole summer night,
But fled at morning; well they knew,
In vain he never twanged the yew.
Right sharp has been the evening shower
That drove him from his Liddel tower;
And, by my faith," the gate-ward said,
"I think 'twill prove a Warden Raid."

V

While thus he spoke, the bold yeoman
Entered the echoing barbican.
He led a small and shaggy nag,
That through a bog, from hag to hag,[2]
Could bound like any Billhope stag.
It bore his wife and children twain;
A half-clothed serf was all their train:
His wife, stout, ruddy, and dark-browed,
Of silver brooch and bracelet proud,
Laughed to her friends among the crowd.
He was of stature passing tall,
But sparely formed and lean withal:
A battered morion [3] on his brow;
A leathern jack, as fence enow,
On his broad shoulders loosely hung;
A border axe behind was slung;
His spear, six Scottish ells in length,
Seemed newly dyed with gore;
His shafts and bow, of wondrous strength,
His hardy partner bore.

VI

Thus to the Ladye did Tinlinn show
The tidings of the English foe:
"Belted Will Howard is marching here,
And hot Lord Dacre, with many a spear,
And all the German hackbut-men [4]
Who have long lain at Askerten.
They crossed the Liddel at curfew hour,
And burned my little lonely tower—
The fiend receive their souls therefor!
It had not been burnt this year and more.
Barnyard and dwelling, blazing bright,
Serve to guide me on my flight,
But I was chased the livelong night.
Black John of Akeshaw and Fergus Græme
Fast upon my traces came,
Until I turned at Priesthaugh Scrogg,
And shot their horses in the bog,
Slew Fergus with my lance outright—
I had him long at high despite;
He drove my cows last Fastern's night." [5]

VII

Now weary scouts from Liddesdale,
Fast hurrying in, confirmed the tale;
As far as they could judge by ken,
Three hours would bring to Teviot's strand
Three thousand armed Englishmen.
Meanwhile, full many a warlike band,
From Teviot, Aill, and Ettrick shade,
Came in, their chief's defence to aid.
There was saddling and mounting in haste,
There was pricking o'er moor and lea;
He that was last at the trysting-place
Was but lightly held of his gay ladye.

VIII

From fair Saint Mary's silver wave.
From dreary Gamescleuch's dusky height,
His ready lances Thirlestane brave
Arrayed beneath a banner bright.
The tressured fleur-de-luce he claims
To wreathe his shield, since royal James,
Encamped by Fala's mossy wave,
The proud distinction grateful gave
For faith 'mid feudal jars;
What time, save Thirlestane alone,
Of Scotland's stubborn barons none
Would march to southern wars;
And hence, in fair remembrance worn,

[1] St. Barnabas' day (June 11)
[2] "the broken ground in a bog" (Scott)
[3] helmet
[4] musketeers
[5] Eve of great Fast of Lent (Shrove-Tuesday).

Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
Hence his high motto shines revealed,
"Ready, aye ready," for the field.

IX

An aged knight, to danger steeled,
With many a moss-trooper, came on;
And, azure in a golden field,
The stars and crescent graced his shield,
Without the bend of Murdieston.
Wide lay his lands round Oakwood Tower,
And wide round haunted Castle-Ower;
High over Borthwick's mountain flood
His wood-embosomed mansion stood;
In the dark glen, so deep below,
The herds of plundered England low,
His bold retainers' daily food,
And bought with danger, blows, and blood.
Marauding chief! his sole delight
The moonlight raid, the morning fight;
Not even the Flower of Yarrow's charms
In youth might tame his rage for arms;
And still in age he spurned at rest,
And still his brows the helmet pressed,
Albeit the blanched locks below
Were white as Dinlay's spotless snow.
Five stately warriors drew the sword
Before their father's band;
A braver knight than Harden's lord
Ne'er belted on a brand.

X

Scotts of Eskdale, a stalwart band,
Came trooping down the Todshawhill;
By the sword they won their land,
And by the sword they hold it still.
Hearken, Ladye, to the tale,
How thy sires won fair Eskdale.

Earl Morton was lord of that valley fair;
The Beattisons were his vassals there.
The earl was gentle and mild of mood,
The vassals were warlike and fierce and rude;
High of heart and haughty of word,
Little they recked of a tame liege-lord.
The earl into fair Eskdale came,
Homage and seigniory to claim:
Of Gilbert the Galliard a heriot[1] he sought,
Saying, "Give thy best steed, as a vassal ought."
"Dear to me is my bonny white steed,
Oft has he helped me at pinch of need;
Lord and earl though thou be, I trow,
I can rein Bucksfoot better than thou."
Word on word gave fuel to fire,
Till so high blazed the Beattison's ire,
But that the earl the flight had ta'en,
The vassals there their lord had slain.
Sore he plied both whip and spur,
As he urged his steed through Eskdale muir:
And it fell down a weary weight,
Just on the threshold of Branksome gate.

XI

The earl was a wrathful man to see,
Full fain avenged would he be.
In haste to Branksome's lord he spoke,
Saying, "Take these traitors to thy yoke;
For a cast[2] of hawks, and a purse of gold,
All Eskdale I'll sell thee, to have and hold:
Beshrew thy heart, of the Beattisons' clan
If thou leavest on Eske a landed man!
But spare Woodkerrick's lands alone,
For he lent me his horse to escape upon."
A glad man then was Branksome bold,
Down he flung him the purse of gold;
To Eskdale soon he spurred amain,
And with him five hundred riders has ta'en.
He left his merrymen in the mist of the hill,
And bade them hold them close and still;

[1] "The feudal superior, in certain cases, was entitled to the best horse of the vassal." (Scott)

[2] pair

And alone he wended to the plain,
To meet with the Galliard and all his train.
To Gilbert the Galliard thus he said:
"Know thou me for thy liege-lord and head;
Deal not with me as with Morton tame,
For Scots play best at the roughest game.
Give me in peace my heriot due,
Thy bonnie white steed, or thou shalt rue.
If my horn I three times wind,
Eskdale shall long have the sound in mind."

XII

Loudly the Beattison laughed in scorn;
"Little care we for thy winded horn.
Ne'er shall it be the Galliard's lot
To yield his steed to a haughty Scot.
Wend thou to Branksome back on foot,
With rusty spur and miry boot."
He blew his bugle so loud and hoarse
That the dun deer started at far Craik-cross;
He blew again so loud and clear,
Through the gray mountain-mist there did lances appear;
And the third blast rang with such a din
That the echoes answered from Pentoun-linn,
And all his riders came lightly in.
Then had you seen a gallant shock,
When saddles were emptied and lances broke!
For each scornful word the Galliard had said
A Beattison on the field was laid.
His own good sword the chieftain drew,
And he bore the Galliard through and through;
Where the Beattisons' blood mixed with the rill,
The Galliard's Haugh men call it still.
The Scotts have scattered the Beattison clan,
In Eskdale they left but one landed man.
The valley of Eske, from the mouth to the source,
Was lost and won for that bonny white horse.

XIII

Whitslade the Hawk, and Headshaw came,
And warriors more than I may name;
From Yarrow-cleugh to Hindhaugh-swair,
From Woodhouselie to Chester-glen,
Trooped man and horse, and bow and spear;
Their gathering word was Bellenden.
And better hearts o'er Border sod
To siege or rescue never rode.
The Ladye marked the aids come in,
And high her heart of pride arose;
She bade her youthful son attend,
That he might know his father's friend,
And learn to face his foes:
"The boy is ripe to look on war;
I saw him draw a cross-bow stiff,
And his true arrow struck afar
The raven's nest upon the cliff;
The red cross on a southern breast
Is broader than the raven's nest:
Thou, Whitslade, shall teach him his weapon to wield,
And o'er him hold his father's shield."

XIV

Well may you think the wily page
Cared not to face the Ladye sage.
He counterfeited childish fear,
And shrieked, and shed full many a tear,
And moaned, and plained[1] in manner wild.
The attendants to the Ladye told,
Some fairy, sure, had changed the child,
That wont to be so free and bold.
Then wrathful was the noble dame;
She blushed blood-red for very shame:
"Hence! ere the clan his faintness view;
Hence with the weakling to Buccleuch!—

[1] complained

Watt Tinlinn, thou shalt be his guide
To Rangleburn's lonely side.—
Sure, some fell fiend has cursed our line,
That coward should e'er be son of mine!"

XV

A heavy task Watt Tinlinn had,
To guide the counterfeited lad.
Soon as the palfrey felt the weight
Of that ill-omened elfish freight,
He bolted, sprung, and reared amain,
Nor heeded bit, nor curb, nor rein.
It cost Watt Tinlinn mickle toil
To drive him but a Scottish mile;
But as a shallow brook they crossed,
The elf, amid the running stream,
His figure changed, like form in dream,
And fled, and shouted, "Lost! lost! lost!"
Full fast the urchin ran and laughed,
But faster still a cloth-yard shaft
Whistled from startled Tinlinn's yew,
And pierced his shoulder through and through.
Although the imp might not be slain,
And though the wound soon healed again,
Yet, as he ran, he yelled for pain;
And Wat of Tinlinn, much aghast,
Rode back to Branksome fiery fast.

XVI

Soon on the hill's steep verge he stood,
That looks o'er Branksome's towers and wood;
And martial murmurs from below
Proclaimed the approaching southern foe.
Through the dark wood, in mingled tone,
Were Border pipes and bugles blown;
The coursers' neighing he could ken,
A measured tread of marching men;
While broke at times the solemn hum,
The Almayn's sullen kettle-drum;
And banners tall, of crimson sheen,
Above the copse appear;
And, glistening through the hawthorns green,
Shine helm and shield and spear.

XVII

Light forayers first, to view the ground,
Spurred their fleet coursers loosely round;
Behind, in close array, and fast,
The Kendal archers, all in green,
Obedient to the bugle blast,
Advancing from the wood were seen.
To back and guard the archer band,
Lord Dacre's billmen [1] were at hand:
A hardy race, on Irthing bred,
With kirtles white and crosses red,
Arrayed beneath the banner tall
That streamed o'er Acre's conquered wall;
And minstrels, as they marched in order,
Played, "Noble Lord Dacre, he dwells on the Border."

XVIII

Behind the English bill and bow
The mercenaries, firm and slow,
Moved on to fight in dark array,
By Conrad led of Wolfenstein,
Who brought the band from distant Rhine,
And sold their blood for foreign pay.
The camp their home, their law the sword,
They knew no country, owned no lord:
They were not armed like England's sons,
But bore the levin [2]-darting guns;
Buff coats, all frounced [3] and broidered o'er,
And morsing-horns [4] and scarfs they wore;
Each better knee [5] was bared, to aid
The warriors in the escalade;
All as they marched, in rugged tongue
Songs of Teutonic feuds they sung.

[1] The bill was a kind of battle-axe on long pole.
[2] lightning
[3] plaited
[4] powder flasks
[5] right knee

XIX

But louder still the clamor grew,
And louder still the minstrels blew,
When, from beneath the greenwood tree,
Rode forth Lord Howard's chivalry;
His men-at-arms, with glaive [1] and spear,
Brought up the battle's glittering rear.
There many a youthful knight, full keen
To gain his spurs, in arms was seen,
With favor in his crest or glove,
Memorial of his ladye-love.
So rode they forth in fair array,
Till full their lengthened lines display;
Then called a halt, and made a stand,
And cried, "Saint George for merry England!"

XX

Now every English eye intent
On Branksome's armed towers was bent;
So near they were that they might know
The straining harsh of each cross-bow;
On battlement and bartizan
Gleamed axe and spear and partisan;
Falcon and culver [2] on each tower
Stood prompt their deadly hail to shower;
And flashing armor frequent broke
From eddying whirls of sable smoke,
Where upon tower and turret head
The seething pitch and molten lead
Reeked like a witch's caldron red.
While yet they gaze, the bridges fall,
The wicket opes, and from the wall
Rides forth the hoary seneschal.

XXI

Armed he rode, all save the head,
His white beard o'er his breastplate spread;
Unbroke by age, erect his seat,
He ruled his eager courser's gait;
Forced him with chastened fire to prance,
And, high curvetting, slow advance:
In sign of truce, his better hand
Displayed a peeled willow wand;
His squire, attending in the rear,
Bore high a gauntlet on a spear.
When they espied him riding out,
Lord Howard and Lord Dacre stout
Sped to the front of their array,
To hear what this old knight should say.

XXII

"Ye English warden lords, of you
Demands the Ladye of Buccleuch,
Why, 'gainst the truce of Border tide,
In hostile guise ye dare to ride,
With Kendal bow and Gilsland brand,
And all yon mercenary band,
Upon the bounds of fair Scotland?
My Ladye reads [3] you swith [4] return;
And, if but one poor straw you burn,
Or do our towers so much molest
As scare one swallow from her nest,
Saint Mary! but we'll light a brand
Shall warm your hearths in Cumberland."—

XXIII

A wrathful man was Dacre's lord,
But calmer Howard took the word:
"May't please thy dame, Sir Seneschal,
To seek the castle's outward wall,
Our pursuivant-at-arms shall show
Both why we came and when we go."
The message sped, the noble dame
To the wall's outward circle came;
Each chief around leaned on his spear,
To see the pursuivant appear.
All in Lord Howard's livery dressed,
The lion argent decked his breast;
He led a boy of blooming hue—
O sight to meet a mother's view!
It was the heir of great Buccleuch.
Obeisance meet the herald made,
And thus his master's will he said:

[1] broadsword [2] small cannon [3] advises [4] quickly

XXIV

"It irks, high dame, my noble lords,
'Gainst ladye fair to draw their swords;
But yet they may not tamely see,
All through the Western Wardenry,
Your law-contemning kinsmen ride,
And burn and spoil the Border-side;
And ill beseems your rank and birth
To make your towers a flemens-firth.[1]
We claim from thee William of Deloraine,
That he may suffer march-treason[2] pain.
It was but last Saint Cuthbert's even
He pricked to Stapleton on Leven,
Harried the lands of Richard Musgrave,
And slew his brother by dint of glaive.
Then, since a lone and widowed dame
These restless riders may not tame,
Either receive within thy towers
Two hundred of my master's powers,
Or straight they sound their warrison,[3]
And storm and spoil thy garrison;
And this fair boy, to London led,
Shall good King Edward's page be bred."

XXV

He ceased—and loud the boy did cry,
And stretched his little arms on high,
Implored for aid each well-known face,
And strove to seek the dame's embrace.
A moment changed that Ladye's cheer,
Gushed to her eye the unbidden tear;
She gazed upon the leaders round,
And dark and sad each warrior frowned;
Then deep within her sobbing breast
She locked the struggling sigh to rest,
Unaltered and collected stood,
And thus replied in dauntless mood:

XXVI

"Say to your lords of high emprize
Who war on women and on boys,
That either William of Deloraine
Will cleanse him by oath of march-treason stain,
Or else he will the combat take
'Gainst Musgrave for his honor's sake.
No knight in Cumberland so good
But William may count with him kin and blood.
Knighthood he took of Douglas' sword,
When English blood swelled Ancram's ford;
And but Lord Dacre's steed was wight,
And bare him ably in the flight,
Himself had seen him dubbed a knight.
For the young heir of Branksome's line,
God be his aid, and God be mine!
Through me no friend shall meet his doom;
Here, while I live, no foe finds room.
Then, if thy lords their purpose urge,
Take our defiance loud and high;
Our slogan is their lyke-wake[4] dirge,
Our moat the grave where they shall lie."

XXVII

Proud she looked round, applause to claim—
Then lightened Thirlestane's eye of flame;
His bugle Wat of Harden blew;
Pensils[5] and pennons wide were flung,
To heaven the Border slogan rung,
"Saint Mary for the young Buccleuch!"
The English war-cry answered wide,
And forward bent each southern spear;
Each Kendal archer made a stride,
And drew the bowstring to his ear;
Each minstrel's war-note loud was blown;—
But, ere a gray-goose shaft had flown,
A horseman galloped from the rear.

[1] an asylum for outlaws
[2] border offences
[3] note of attack
[4] funeral watch
[5] streamers

XXVIII

"Ah! noble lords!" he breathless said,
"What treason has your march betrayed?
What make you here from aid so far,
Before you walls, around you war?
Your foemen triumph in the thought
That in the toils the lion's caught.
Already on dark Ruberslaw
The Douglas holds his weapon-schaw; [1]
The lances, waving in his train,
Clothe the dun heath like autumn grain;
And on the Liddel's northern strand,
To bar retreat to Cumberland,
Lord Maxwell ranks his merrymen good
Beneath the eagle and the rood; [2]
And Jedwood, Eske, and Teviotdale,
Have to proud Angus come;
And all the Merse and Lauderdale
Have risen with haughty Home.
An exile from Northumberland,
In Liddesdale I've wandered long,
But still my heart was with merry England,
And cannot brook my country's wrong;
And hard I've spurred all night, to show
The mustering of the coming foe."

XXIX

"And let them come!" fierce Dacre cried;
"For soon yon crest, my father's pride,
That swept the shores of Judah's sea,
And waved in gales of Galilee,
From Branksome's highest towers displayed,
Shall mock the rescue's lingering aid!—
Level each harquebuss on row;
Draw, merry archers, draw the bow;
Up, billmen, to the walls, and cry,
Dacre for England, win or die!"—

XXX

"Yet hear," quoth Howard, "calmly hear,
Nor deem my words the words of fear:
For who, in field or foray slack,
Saw the Blanche Lion e'er fall back?
But thus to risk our Border flower
In strife against a kingdom's power,
Ten thousand Scots 'gainst thousands three,
Certes, were desperate policy.
Nay, take the terms the Ladye made
Ere conscious of the advancing aid:
Let Musgrave meet fierce Deloraine
In single fight, and if he gain,
He gains for us; but if he's crossed,
'Tis but a single warrior lost:
The rest, retreating as they came,
Avoid defeat and death and shame."

XXXI

Ill could the haughty Dacre brook
His brother warden's sage rebuke;
And yet his forward step he stayed,
And slow and sullenly obeyed.
But ne'er again the Border side
Did these two lords in friendship ride;
And this slight discontent, men say,
Cost blood upon another day.

XXXII

The pursuivant-at-arms again
Before the castle took his stand;
His trumpet called with parleying strain
The leaders of the Scottish band;
And he defied, in Musgrave's right,
Stout Deloraine to single fight.
A gauntlet at their feet he laid,
And thus the terms of fight he said:
"If in the lists good Musgrave's sword
Vanquish the Knight of Deloraine,
Your youthful chieftain, Branksome's lord,
Shall hostage for his clan remain;
If Deloraine foil good Musgrave,
The boy his liberty shall have.
Howe'er it falls, the English band,
Unharming Scots, by Scots unharmed,
In peaceful march, like men unarmed,
Shall straight retreat to Cumberland."

[1] "the military array of a county" (Scott)
[2] cross

XXXIII

Unconscious of the near relief,
The proffer pleased each Scottish chief,
Though much the Ladye sage gainsaid;
For though their hearts were brave and true,
From Jedwood's recent sack they knew
How tardy was the Regent's aid:
And you may guess the noble dame
Durst not the secret prescience own,
Sprung from the art she might not name,
By which the coming help was known.
Closed was the compact, and agreed
That lists should be enclosed with speed
Beneath the castle on a lawn:
They fixed the morrow for the strife,
On foot, with Scottish axe and knife,
At the fourth hour from peep of dawn;
When Deloraine, from sickness freed,
Or else a champion in his stead,
Should for himself and chieftain stand
Against stout Musgrave, hand to hand.

XXXIV

I know right well that in their lay
Full many minstrels sing and say
Such combat should be made on horse,
On foaming steed, in full career,
With brand to aid, whenas the spear
Should shiver in the course:
But he, the jovial harper, taught
Me, yet a youth, how it was fought,
In guise which now I say;
He knew each ordinance and clause
Of Black Lord Archibald's battle-laws,
In the old Douglas' day.
He brooked not, he, that scoffing tongue
Should tax his minstrelsy with wrong,
Or call his song untrue:
For this, when they the goblet plied,
And such rude taunt had chafed his pride,
The Bard of Reull he slew.
On Teviot's side in fight they stood,
And tuneful hands were stained with blood,
Where still the thorn's white branches wave,
Memorial o'er his rival's grave.

XXXV

Why should I tell the rigid doom
That dragged my master to his tomb;
How Ousenam's maidens tore their hair,
Wept till their eyes were dead and dim,
And wrung their hands for love of him
Who died at Jedwood Air?
He died!—his scholars, one by one
To the cold silent grave are gone;
And I, alas! survive alone,
To muse o'er rivalries of yore,
And grieve that I shall hear no more
The strains, with envy heard before;
For, with my minstrel brethren fled,
My jealousy of song is dead.

He paused: the listening dames again
Applaud the hoary Minstrel's strain.
With many a word of kindly cheer,—
In pity half, and half sincere,—
Marvelled the Duchess how so well
His legendary song could tell
Of ancient deeds, so long forgot;
Of feuds, whose memory was not;
Of forests, now laid waste and bare;
Of towers, which harbor now the hare;
Of manners, long since changed and gone;
Of chiefs, who under their gray stone
So long had slept that fickle Fame
Had blotted from her rolls their name,
And twined round some new minion's head
The fading wreath for which they bled:
In sooth, 'twas strange this old man's verse
Could call them from their marble hearse.

The harper smiled, well pleased; for ne'er
Was flattery lost on poet's ear.
A simple race! they waste their toil
For the vain tribute of a smile;

E'en when in age their flame expires,
Her dulcet breath can fan its fires:
Their drooping fancy wakes at praise,
And strives to trim the short-lived blaze.

Smiled then, well pleased, the aged man,
And thus his tale continued ran.

CANTO FIFTH

I

Call it not vain:—they do not err,
  Who say that when the poet dies
Mute Nature mourns her worshipper
  And celebrates his obsequies;
Who say tall cliff and cavern lone
For the departed bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
That flowers in tears of balm distil;
Through his loved groves that breezes sigh,
And oaks in deeper groan reply,
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

II

Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Those things inanimate can mourn,
But that the stream, the wood, the gale,
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those who, else forgotten long,
Lived in the poet's faithful song,
And, with the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death.
The maid's pale shade, who wails her lot,
That love, true love, should be forgot,
From rose and hawthorn shakes the tear
Upon the gentle minstrel's bier:
The phantom knight, his glory fled,
Mourns o'er the field he heaped with dead,
Mounts the wild blast that sweeps amain
And shrieks along the battle-plain;
The chief, whose antique crownlet long
Still sparkled in the feudal song,
Now, from the mountain's misty throne,
Sees, in the thanedom once his own,
His ashes undistinguished lie,
His place, his power, his memory die;
His groans the lonely caverns fill,
His tears of rage impel the rill;
All mourn the minstrel's harp unstrung,
Their name unknown, their praise unsung.

III

Scarcely the hot assault was stayed,
The terms of truce were scarcely made,
When they could spy, from Branksome's towers,
The advancing march of martial powers.
Thick clouds of dust afar appeared,
And trampling steeds were faintly heard;
Bright spears above the columns dun
Glanced momentary to the sun;
And feudal banners fair displayed
The bands that moved to Branksome's aid.

IV

Vails not to tell each hardy clan,
  From the fair Middle Marches came;
The Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
  Announcing Douglas, dreaded name!
Vails not to tell what steeds did spurn,
Where the Seven Spears of Wedderburne
  Their men in battle-order set,
And Swinton laid the lance in rest
That tamed of yore the sparkling crest
  Of Clarence's Plantagenet.
Nor list I say what hundreds more,
From the rich Merse and Lammermore,
And Tweed's fair borders, to the war,
Beneath the crest of Old Dunbar,
  And Hepburn's mingled banners, come
Down the steep mountain glittering far,
  And shouting still, "A Home! a Home!"

V

Now squire and knight, from Branksome sent,
On many a courteous message went:
To every chief and lord they paid
Meet thanks for prompt and powerful aid,
And told them how a truce was made,
And how a day of fight was ta'en
'Twixt Musgrave and stout Deloraine;
And how the Ladye prayed them dear
That all would stay the fight to see,
And deign, in love and courtesy,
To taste of Branksome cheer.
Nor, while they bade to feast each Scot,
Were England's noble lords forgot.
Himself, the hoary seneschal,
Rode forth, in seemly terms to call
Those gallant foes to Branksome Hall.
Accepted Howard, than whom knight
Was never dubbed, more bold in fight,
Nor, when from war and armor free,
More famed for stately courtesy;
But angry Dacre rather chose
In his pavilion to repose.

VI

Now, noble dame, perchance you ask
How these two hostile armies met,
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes,
They met on Teviot's strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in foreign land:
The hands, the spear that lately grasped,
Still in the mailed gauntlet clasped,
Were interchanged in greeting dear;
Visors were raised and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day;
And some, with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the football play.

VII

Yet, be it known, had bugles blown
Or sign of war been seen,
Those bands, so fair together ranged,
Those hands, so frankly interchanged,
Had dyed with gore the green:
The merry shout by Teviot-side
Had sunk in war-cries wild and wide,
And in the groan of death;
And whingers,[1] now in friendship bare,
The social meal to part and share,
Had found a bloody sheath.
'Twixt truce and war, such sudden change
Was not infrequent, nor held strange,
In the old Border-day;
But yet on Branksome's towers and town,
In peaceful merriment, sunk down
The sun's declining ray.

VIII

The blithesome signs of wassail gay
Decayed not with the dying day;
Soon through the latticed windows tall
Of lofty Branksome's lordly hall,
Divided square by shafts of stone,
Huge flakes of ruddy lustre shone;
Nor less the gilded rafters rang
With merry harp and beakers' clang;
And frequent, on the darkening plain,
Loud hollo, whoop, or whistle ran,
As bands, their stragglers to regain,
Give the shrill watchword of their clan;
And revellers, o'er their bowls, proclaim
Douglas' or Dacre's conquering name.

[1] poniards

IX

Less frequent heard, and fainter still,
At length the various clamors died,
And you might hear from Branksome hill
No sound but Teviot's rushing tide;
Save when the changing sentinel
The challenge of his watch could tell;
And save where, through the dark profound,
The clanging axe and hammer's sound
Rung from the nether lawn;
For many a busy hand toiled there,
Strong pales to shape and beams to square,
The lists' dread barriers to prepare
Against the morrow's dawn.

X

Margaret from hall did soon retreat,
Despite the dame's reproving eye;
Nor marked she, as she left her seat,
Full many a stifled sigh:
For many a noble warrior strove
To win the Flower of Teviot's love,
And many a bold ally.
With throbbing head and anxious heart,
All in her lonely bower apart,
In broken sleep she lay.
Betimes from silken couch she rose;
While yet the bannered hosts repose,
She viewed the dawning day:
Of all the hundreds sunk to rest,
First woke the loveliest and the best.

XI

She gazed upon the inner court,
Which in the tower's tall shadow lay,
Where coursers' clang and stamp and snort
Had rung the livelong yesterday:
Now still as death; till stalking slow,—
The jingling spurs announced his tread,—
A stately warrior passed below;
But when he raised his plumed head—
Blessed Mary! can it be?—
Secure, as if in Ousenam bowers,
He walks through Branksome's hostile towers,
With fearless step and free.
She dared not sign, she dared not speak—
O, if one page's slumbers break,
His blood the price must pay!
Not all the pearls Queen Mary wears,
Not Margaret's yet more precious tears,
Shall buy his life a day.

XII

Yet was his hazard small; for well
You may bethink you of the spell
Of that sly urchin page:
This to his lord he did impart,
And made him seem, by glamour art,
A knight from Hermitage.
Unchallenged, thus, the warder's post,
The court, unchallenged, thus he crossed,
For all the vassalage;
But O, what magic's quaint disguise
Could blind fair Margaret's azure eyes!
She started from her seat;
While with surprise and fear she strove,
And both could scarcely master love—
Lord Henry's at her feet.

XIII

Oft have I mused what purpose bad
That foul malicious urchin had
To bring this meeting round;
For happy love's a heavenly sight,
And by a vile malignant sprite
In such no joy is found;
And oft I've deemed, perchance he thought
Their erring passion might have wrought
Sorrow and sin and shame,
And death to Cranstoun's gallant Knight,
And to the gentle Ladye bright
Disgrace and loss of fame.

But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well.
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven:
It is not fantasy's hot fire,
Whose wishes, soon as granted, fly;
It liveth not in fierce desire,
With dead desire it doth not die;
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.—
Now leave we Margaret and her knight,
To tell you of the approaching fight.

XIV

Their warning blasts the bugles blew,
The pipe's shrill port[1] aroused each clan;
In haste the deadly strife to view,
The trooping warriors eager ran:
Thick round the lists their lances stood,
Like blasted pines in Ettrick wood;
To Branksome many a look they threw,
The combatants' approach to view,
And bandied many a word of boast
About the knight each favored most.

XV

Meantime full anxious was the dame;
For now arose disputed claim
Of who should fight for Deloraine,
'Twixt Harden and 'twixt Thirlestane.
They gan to reckon kin and rent,
And frowning brow on brow was bent;
But yet not long the strife—for, lo!
Himself, the Knight of Deloraine,
Strong, as it seemed, and free from pain,
In armor sheathed from top to toe,
Appeared and craved the combat due.
The dame her charm successful knew,
And the fierce chiefs their claims withdrew.

[1] "A martial piece of music adapted to the bagpipes." (Scott)

XVI

When for the lists they sought the plain,
The stately Ladye's silken rein
Did noble Howard hold;
Unarmed by her side he walked,
And much in courteous phrase they talked
Of feats of arms of old.
Costly his garb—his Flemish ruff
Fell o'er his doublet, shaped of buff,
With satin slashed and lined;
Tawny his boot, and gold his spur,
His cloak was all of Poland fur,
His hose with silver twined;
His Bilboa blade, by Marchmen felt,
Hung in a broad and studded belt;
Hence, in rude phrase, the Borderers still
Called noble Howard, Belted Will.

XVII

Behind Lord Howard and the dame
Fair Margaret on her palfrey came,
Whose footcloth swept the ground;
White was her wimple[2] and her veil,
And her loose locks a chaplet pale
Of whitest roses bound;
The lordly Angus, by her side,
In courtesy to cheer her tried;
Without his aid, her hand in vain
Had strove to guide her broidered rein.
He deemed she shuddered at the sight
Of warriors met for mortal fight;
But cause of terror, all unguessed,
Was fluttering in her gentle breast,
When, in their chairs of crimson placed,
The dame and she the barriers graced.

XVIII

Prize of the field, the young Buccleuch
An English knight led forth to view;
Scarce rued the boy his present plight,
So much he longed to see the fight.

[2] plaited kerchief

Within the lists in knightly pride
High Home and haughty Dacre ride;
Their leading staffs of steel they wield,
As marshals of the mortal field,
While to each knight their care assigned
Like vantage of the sun and wind.
Then heralds hoarse did loud proclaim,
In King and Queen and Warden's name,
That none, while lasts the strife,
Should dare, by look or sign or word,
Aid to a champion to afford,
On peril of his life;
And not a breath the silence broke
Till thus the alternate heralds spoke:—

XIX

ENGLISH HERALD

"Here standeth Richard of Musgrave,
Good knight and true, and freely born,
Amends from Deloraine to crave,
For foul despiteous scathe and scorn.
He sayeth that William of Deloraine
Is traitor false by Border laws;
This with his sword he will maintain,
So help him God and his good cause!"

XX

SCOTTISH HERALD

"Here standeth William of Deloraine,
Good knight and true, of noble strain,
Who sayeth that foul treason's stain,
Since he bore arms, ne'er soiled his coat;
And that, so help him God above!
He will on Musgrave's body prove
He lies most foully in his throat."

LORD DACRE

"Forward, brave champions, to the fight!
Sound trumpets!"

LORD HOME

"God defend the right!"—
Then, Teviot, how thine echoes rang,
When bugle-sound and trumpet-clang
Let loose the martial foes,
And in mid-list, with shield poised high,
And measured step and wary eye,
The combatants did close!

XXI

Ill would it suit your gentle ear,
Ye lovely listeners, to hear
How to the axe the helms did sound,
And blood poured down from many a wound;
For desperate was the strife and long,
And either warrior fierce and strong.
But, were each dame a listening knight,
I well could tell how warriors fight;
For I have seen war's lightning flashing,
Seen the claymore[1] with bayonet clashing,
Seen through red blood the war-horse dashing,
And scorned, amid the reeling strife,
To yield a step for death or life.

XXII

'Tis done, 'tis done! that fatal blow
Has stretched him on the bloody plain;
He strives to rise—brave Musgrave, no!
Thence never shalt thou rise again!
He chokes in blood—some friendly hand
Undo the visor's barred band,
Unfix the gorget's iron clasp,
And give him room for life to gasp!—
O, bootless aid!—haste, holy friar,
Haste, ere the sinner shall expire!
Of all his guilt let him be shriven,
And smooth his path from earth to heaven!

XXIII

In haste the holy friar sped;—
His naked foot was dyed with red,
As through the lists he ran;
Unmindful of the shouts on high
That hailed the conqueror's victory,
He raised the dying man;

[1] large sword

Loose waved his silver beard and hair,
As o'er him he kneeled down in prayer;
And still the crucifix on high
He holds before his darkening eye;
And still he bends an anxious ear,
His faltering penitence to hear;
Still props him from the bloody sod,
Still, even when soul and body part,
Pours ghostly comfort on his heart,
And bids him trust in God!
Unheard he prays;—the death-pang's o'er!
Richard of Musgrave breathes no more.

XXIV

As if exhausted in the fight,
Or musing o'er the piteous sight,
The silent victor stands;
His beaver did he not unclasp,
Marked not the shouts, felt not the grasp
Of gratulating hands.
When lo! strange cries of wild surprise,
Mingled with seeming terror, rise
Among the Scottish bands;
And all, amid the thronged array,
In panic haste gave open way
To a half-naked ghastly man,
Who downward from the castle ran:
He crossed the barriers at a bound,
And wild and haggard looked around,
As dizzy and in pain;
And all upon the armed ground
Knew William of Deloraine!
Each ladye sprung from seat with speed;
Vaulted each marshal from his steed;
"And who art thou," they cried,
"Who hast this battle fought and won?"
His plumed helm was soon undone—
"Cranstoun of Teviot-side!
For this fair prize I've fought and won,"—
And to the Ladye led her son.

XXV

Full oft the rescued boy she kissed,
And often pressed him to her breast
For, under all her dauntless show,
Her heart had throbbed at every blow;
Yet not Lord Cranstoun deigned she greet,
Though low he kneeled at her feet.
Me lists not tell what words were made,
What Douglas, Home, and Howard said—
For Howard was a generous foe—
And how the clan united prayed
The Ladye would the feud forego,
And deign to bless the nuptial hour
Of Cranstoun's lord and Teviot's Flower.

XXVI

She looked to river, looked to hill,
Thought on the Spirit's prophecy,
Then broke her silence stern and still:
"Not you, but Fate, has vanquished me;
Their influence kindly stars may shower
On Teviot's tide and Branksome's tower,
For pride is quelled and love is free."
She took fair Margaret by the hand,
Who, breathless, trembling, scarce might stand,
That hand to Cranstoun's lord gave she:
"As I am true to thee and thine,
Do thou be true to me and mine!
This clasp of love our bond shall be,
For this is your betrothing day,
And all these noble lords shall stay
To grace it with their company."

XXVII

All as they left the listed plain,
Much of the story she did gain:
How Cranstoun fought with Deloraine,
And of his page, and of the book
Which from the wounded knight he took;
And how he sought her castle high,
That morn, by help of gramarye;
How, in Sir William's armor dight,
Stolen by his page, while slept the knight,
He took on him the single fight.

But half his tale he left unsaid,
And lingered till he joined the maid.—
Cared not the Ladye to betray
Her mystic arts in view of day;
But well she thought, ere midnight came,
Of that strange page the pride to tame,
From his foul hands the book to save,
And send it back to Michael's grave.—
Needs not to tell each tender word
'Twixt Margaret and 'twixt Cranstoun's lord;
Nor how she told of former woes,
And how her bosom fell and rose
While he and Musgrave bandied blows.—
Needs not these lovers' joys to tell;
One day, fair maids, you'll know them well.

XXVIII

William of Deloraine some chance
Had wakened from his deathlike trance,
And taught that in the listed plain
Another, in his arms and shield,
Against fierce Musgrave axe did wield,
Under the name of Deloraine.
Hence, to the field unarmed he ran,
And hence his presence scared the clan,
Who held him for some fleeting wraith,
And not a man of blood and breath.
Not much this new ally he loved,
Yet, when he saw what hap had proved,
He greeted him right heartile:
He would not waken old debate,
For he was void of rancorous hate,
Though rude and scant of courtesy;
In raids he spilt but seldom blood,
Unless when men-at-arms withstood,
Or, as was meet, for deadly feud.
He ne'er bore grudge for stalwart blow,
Ta'en in fair fight from gallant foe.
And so 'twas seen of him e'en now,
When on dead Musgrave he looked down:
Grief darkened on his rugged brow,
Though half disguised with a frown;
And thus, while sorrow bent his head,
His foeman's epitaph he made:

XXIX

"Now, Richard Musgrave, liest thou here,
I ween, my deadly enemy;
For, if I slew thy brother dear,
Thou slew'st a sister's son to me;
And when I lay in dungeon dark
Of Naworth Castle long months three,
Till ransomed for a thousand mark,
Dark Musgrave, it was 'long of[1] thee.
And, Musgrave, could our fight be tried,
And thou wert now alive, as I,
No mortal man should us divide,
Till one, or both of us, did die:
Yet rest thee God! for well I know
I ne'er shall find a nobler foe.
In all the northern counties here,
Whose word is Snaffle,[2] spur, and spear,
Thou wert the best to follow gear.
'Twas pleasure, as we looked behind,
To see how thou the chase could'st wind,
Cheer the dark bloodhound on his way,
And with the bugle rouse the fray!
I'd give the lands of Deloraine,
Dark Musgrave were alive again."

XXX

So mourned he till Lord Dacre's band
Were bowning[3] back to Cumberland.
They raised brave Musgrave from the field
And laid him on his bloody shield;
On levelled lances, four and four,
By turns, the noble burden bore.
Before, at times, upon the gale
Was heard the Minstrel's plaintive wail;
Behind, four priests in sable stole
Sung requiem for the warrior's soul;
Around, the horsemen slowly rode;
With trailing pikes the spearmen trode;
And thus the gallant knight they bore
Through Liddesdale to Leven's shore,
Thence to Holme Coltrame's lofty nave,
And laid him in his father's grave.

---

[1] on account of
[2] bridle, bit
[3] preparing to go

The harp's wild notes, though hushed the song,
The mimic march of death prolong;
Now seems it far, and now a-near,
Now meets, and now eludes the ear,
Now seems some mountain side to sweep,
Now faintly dies in valley deep,
Seems now as if the Minstrel's wail,
Now the sad requiem, loads the gale;
Last, o'er the warrior's closing grave,
Rung the full choir in choral stave.

After due pause, they bade him tell
Why he, who touched the harp so well,
Should thus, with ill-rewarded toil,
Wander a poor and thankless soil,
When the more generous Southern land
Would well requite his skilful hand.

The aged harper, howsoe'er
His only friend, his harp, was dear,
Liked not to hear it ranked so high
Above his flowing poesy:
Less liked he still that scornful jeer
Misprized the land he loved so dear;
High was the sound as thus again
The bard resumed his minstrel strain.

CANTO SIXTH

I

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim,—
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung.

II

O Caledonia, stern and wild,
Meet nurse for a poetic child!
Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
Land of the mountain and the flood,
Land of my sires! what mortal hand
Can e'er untie the filial band
That knits me to thy rugged strand!
Still, as I view each well-known scene,
Think what is now and what hath been,
Seems as to me, of all bereft,
Sole friends thy woods and streams were left;
And thus I love them better still,
Even in extremity of ill.
By Yarrow's stream still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek;
Still lay my head by Teviot-stone,
Though there, forgotten and alone,
The bard may draw his parting groan.

III

Not scorned like me, to Branksome Hall
The minstrels came at festive call;
Trooping they came from near and far,
The jovial priests of mirth and war;
Alike for feast and fight prepared,
Battle and banquet both they shared.
Of late, before each martial clan
They blew their death-note in the van,
But now for every merry mate
Rose the portcullis' iron gate;
They sound the pipe, they strike the string,
They dance, they revel, and they sing,
Till the rude turrets shake and ring.

IV

Me lists not at this tide declare
The splendor of the spousal rite,
How mustered in the chapel fair
Both maid and matron, squire and knight;
Me lists not tell of owches [1] rare,
Of mantles green, and braided hair,
And kirtles furred with miniver; [2]
What plumage waved the altar round,
How spurs and ringing chainlets sound:
And hard it were for bard to speak
The changeful hue of Margaret's cheek,
That lovely hue which comes and flies,
As awe and shame alternate rise!

V

Some bards have sung, the Ladye high
Chapel or altar came not nigh,
Nor durst the rites of spousal grace,
So much she feared each holy place.
False slanders these: I trust right well,
She wrought not by forbidden spell,
For mighty words and signs have power
O'er sprites in planetary hour;
Yet scarce I praise their venturous part
Who tamper with such dangerous art.
But this for faithful truth I say,—
The Ladye by the altar stood,
Of sable velvet her array,
And on her head a crimson hood,
With pearls embroidered and entwined,
Guarded with gold, with ermine lined;
A merlin sat upon her wrist,
Held by a leash of silken twist.

VI

The spousal rites were ended soon;
'Twas now the merry hour of noon,
And in the lofty arched hall
Was spread the gorgeous festival.
Steward and squire, with heedful haste,
Marshalled the rank of every guest;
Pages, with ready blade, were there,
The mighty meal to carve and share:
O'er capon, heron-shew,[3] and crane,
And princely peacock's gilded train,
And o'er the boar-head, garnished brave,[4]
And cygnet from Saint Mary's wave,
O'er ptarmigan and venison,
The priest had spoke his benison.
Then rose the riot and the din,
Above, beneath, without, within!
For, from the lofty balcony,
Rung trumpet, shalm,[5] and psaltery:
Their clanging bowls old warriors quaffed,
Loudly they spoke and loudly laughed;
Whispered young knights, in tone more mild,
To ladies fair, and ladies smiled.
The hooded hawks, high perched on beam,
The clamor joined with whistling scream,
And flapped their wings and shook their bells,
In concert with the stag-hounds' yells.
Round go the flasks of ruddy wine,
From Bourdeaux, Orleans, or the Rhine;
Their tasks the busy sewers [6] ply,
And all is mirth and revelry.

VII

The Goblin Page, omitting still
No opportunity of ill,
Strove now, while blood ran hot and high,
To rouse debate and jealousy;
Till Conrad, Lord of Wolfenstein,
By nature fierce, and warm with wine,
And now in humor highly crossed
About some steeds his band had lost,
High words to words succeeding still,
Smote with his gauntlet stout Hunthill,
A hot and hardy Rutherford,
Whom men called Dickon Draw-the-Sword.
He took it on the page's saye,
Hunthill had driven these steeds away.

[1] jewels
[2] ermine
[3] young heron
[4] finely
[5] wind instrument resembling clarionet
[6] servers

Then Howard, Home, and Douglas rose,
The kindling discord to compose;
Stern Rutherford right little said,
But bit his glove and shook his head.
A fortnight thence, in Inglewood,
Stout Conrad, cold, and drenched in blood,
His bosom gored with many a wound,
Was by a woodman's lyme-dog [1] found:
Unknown the manner of his death,
Gone was his brand, both sword and sheath;
But ever from that time, 'twas said,
That Dickon wore a Cologne blade.

VIII

The dwarf, who feared his master's eye
Might his foul treachery espie,
Now sought the castle buttery,
Where many a yeoman, bold and free,
Revelled as merrily and well
As those that sat in lordly selle.
Watt Tinlinn there did frankly raise
The pledge to Arthur Fire-the-Braes;
And he, as by his breeding bound,
To Howard's merrymen sent it round.
To quit them, on the English side,
Red Roland Forster loudly cried,
"A deep carouse to yon fair bride!"
At every pledge, from vat and pail,
Foamed forth in floods the nut-brown ale,
While shout the riders every one;
Such day of mirth ne'er cheered their clan,
Since old Buccleuch the name did gain,
When in the cleuch the buck was ta'en.

IX

The wily page, with vengeful thought,
Remembered him of Tinlinn's yew,
And swore it should be dearly bought
That ever he the arrow drew.
First, he the yeoman did molest
With bitter jibe and taunting jest;
Told how he fled at Solway strife,
And how Hob Armstrong cheered his wife;
Then, shunning still his powerful arm,
At unawares he wrought him harm;
From trencher stole his choicest cheer,
Dashed from his lips his can of beer;
Then, to his knee sly creeping on,
With bodkin pierced him to the bone:
The venomed wound and festering joint
Long after rued that bodkin's point.
The startled yeoman swore and spurned,
And board and flagons overturned.
Riot and clamor wild began;
Back to the hall the urchin ran,
Took in a darkling nook his post,
And grinned, and muttered, "Lost! lost! lost!"

X

By this, the dame, lest farther fray
Should mar the concord of the day,
Had bid the minstrels tune their lay.
And first stepped forth old Albert Græme,
The minstrel of that ancient name:
Was none who struck the harp so well
Within the Land Debatable;
Well friended, too, his hardy kin,
Whoever lost, were sure to win;
They sought the beeves that made their broth
In Scotland and in England both.
In homely guise, as nature bade,
His simple song the Borderer said.

XI

ALBERT GRÆME

It was an English ladye bright,
(The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
And she would marry a Scottish knight,
For Love will still be lord of all.

Blithely they saw the rising sun,
When he shone fair on Carlisle wall;
But they were sad ere day was done,
Though Love was still the lord of all.

[1] hound on leash

Her sire gave brooch and jewel fine,
  Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
Her brother gave but a flask of wine,
  For ire that Love was lord of all.

For she had lands, both meadow and lea,
  Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;
And he swore her death, ere he would see
  A Scottish knight the lord of all!

XII

That wine she had not tasted well,
  (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
When dead, in her true love's arms she fell,
  For Love was still the lord of all.

He pierced her brother to the heart,
  Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall;—
So perish all would true love part,
  That Love may still be lord of all!

And then he took the cross divine,
  (Where the sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
And died for her sake in Palestine,
  So Love was still the lord of all.

Now all ye lovers, that faithful prove,
  (The sun shines fair on Carlisle wall)
Pray for their souls who died for love,
  For Love shall still be lord of all!

XIII

As ended Albert's simple lay,
  Arose a bard of loftier port,
For sonnet, rhyme, and roundelay
  Renowned in haughty Henry's court:
There rung thy harp, unrivalled long,
Fitztraver of the silver song!
The gentle Surrey [1] loved his lyre—
  Who has not heard of Surrey's fame?

His was the hero's soul of fire,
  And his the bard's immortal name,
And his was love, exalted high
By all the glow of chivalry.

XIV

They sought together climes afar,
  And oft, within some olive grove,
When even came with twinkling star,
  They sung of Surrey's absent love.
His step the Italian peasant stayed,
  And deemed that spirits from on high,
Round where some hermit saint was laid,
  Were breathing heavenly melody;
So sweet did harp and voice combine
To praise the name of Geraldine.

XV

Fitztraver, O, what tongue may say
  The pangs thy faithful bosom knew,
When Surrey of the deathless lay
  Ungrateful Tudor's sentence slew?
Regardless of the tyrant's frown,
His harp called wrath and vengeance down.
He left, for Naworth's iron towers,
Windsor's green glades and courtly bowers,
And, faithful to his patron's name,
With Howard still Fitztraver came;
Lord William's foremost favorite he,
And chief of all his minstrelsy.

XVI

FITZTRAVER

'Twas All-souls' eve, and Surrey's heart beat high;
  He heard the midnight bell with anxious start,
Which told the mystic hour, approaching nigh,
  When wise Cornelius promised by his art

[1] Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. See above, p. 224.

To show to him the ladye of his heart,
Albeit betwixt them roared the ocean grim;
Yet so the sage had hight[1] to play his part,
That he should see her form in life and limb,
And mark if still she loved and still she thought of him.

XVII

Dark was the vaulted room of gramarye,
To which the wizard led the gallant knight,
Save that before a mirror, huge and high,
A hallowed taper shed a glimmering light
On mystic implements of magic might,
On cross, and character, and talisman,
And almagest,[2] and altar, nothing bright;
For fitful was the lustre, pale and wan,
As watch-light by the bed of some departing man.

XVIII

But soon, within that mirror huge and high,
Was seen a self-emitted light to gleam;
And forms upon its breast the earl gan spy,
Cloudy and indistinct as feverish dream;
Till, slow arranging and defined, they seem
To form a lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's[3] silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in gloom.

XIX

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form which lay on couch of Ind!
O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined;
All in her night-robe loose she lay reclined,
And pensive read from tablet eburnine[4]
Some strain that seemed her inmost soul to find:
That favored strain was Surrey's raptured line,
That fair and lovely form, the Lady Geraldine.

XX

Slow rolled the clouds upon the lovely form,
And swept the goodly vision all away—
So royal envy rolled the murky storm
O'er my beloved Master's glorious day.
Thou jealous, ruthless tyrant! Heaven repay
On thee, and on thy children's latest line,
The wild caprice of thy despotic sway,
The gory bridal bed, the plundered shrine,
The murdered Surrey's blood, the tears of Geraldine!

[1] promised [2] astronomical treatise [3] A city in India. [4] of ivory

XXI

Both Scots and Southern chiefs prolong
Applauses of Fitztraver's song;
These hated Henry's name as death,
And those still held the ancient faith.
Then from his seat with lofty air
Rose Harold, bard of brave Saint Clair,—
Saint Clair, who, feasting high at Home,
Had with that lord to battle come.
Harold was born where restless seas
Howl round the storm-swept Orcades;
Where erst Saint Clairs held princely sway
O'er isle and islet, strait and bay;—
Still nods their palace to its fall,
Thy pride and sorrow, fair Kirkwall!—
Thence oft he marked fierce Pentland rave,
As if grim Odin rode her wave,
And watched the whilst, with visage pale
And throbbing heart, the struggling sail;
For all of wonderful and wild
Had rapture for the lonely child.

XXII

And much of wild and wonderful
In these rude isles might Fancy cull;
For thither came in times afar
Stern Lochlin's sons of roving war,
The Norsemen, trained to spoil and blood,
Skilled to prepare the raven's food;
Kings of the main their leaders brave,
Their barks the dragons of the wave.
And there, in many a stormy vale,
The Scald had told his wondrous tale,
And many a Runic column high
Had witnessed grim idolatry.
And thus had Harold in his youth
Learned many a Saga's rhyme uncouth,—
Of that Sea-Snake, tremendous curled,
Whose monstrous circle girds the world;
Of those dread Maids whose hideous yell
Maddens the battle's bloody swell;
Of chiefs who, guided through the gloom
By the pale death-lights of the tomb,
Ransacked the graves of warriors old,
Their falchions wrenched from corpses' hold,
Waked the deaf tomb with war's alarms,
And bade the dead arise to arms!
With war and wonder all on flame,
To Roslin's bowers young Harold came,
Where, by sweet glen and greenwood tree,
He learned a milder minstrelsy;
Yet something of the Northern spell
Mixed with the softer numbers well.

XXIII

HAROLD

O, listen, listen, ladies gay!
No haughty feat of arms I tell;
Soft is the note, and sad the lay,
That mourns the lovely Rosabelle.

"Moor, moor the barge, ye gallant crew!
And, gentle ladye, deign to stay!
Rest thee in Castle Ravensheuch,
Nor tempt the stormy firth to-day.

"The blackening wave is edged with white;
To inch [1] and rock the sea-mews fly;
The fishers have heard the Water Sprite,
Whose screams forebode that wreck is nigh.

"Last night the gifted Seer did view
A wet shroud swathed round ladye gay;
Then stay thee, fair, in Ravensheuch:
Why cross the gloomy firth to-day?"

" 'Tis not because Lord Lindesay's heir
To-night at Roslin leads the ball,
But that my ladye-mother there
Sits lonely in her castle-hall.

[1] isle

" 'Tis not because the ring they ride,
And Lindesay at the ring rides well,
But that my sire the wine will chide,
If 'tis not filled by Rosabelle."

O'er Roslin all that dreary night
A wondrous blaze was seen to gleam;
'Twas broader than the watch-fire's light,
And redder than the bright moonbeam.

It glared on Roslin's castled rock,
It ruddied all the copsewood glen;
'Twas seen from Dreyden's groves of oak,
And seen from caverned Hawthornden.

Seemed all on fire that chapel proud
Where Roslin's chiefs uncoffined lie,
Each baron, for a sable shroud,
Sheathed in his iron panoply.

Seemed all on fire within, around,
Deep sacristy and altar's pale;
Shone every pillar foliage-bound,
And glimmered all the dead men's mail.

Blazed battlement and pinnet[1] high,
Blazed every rose-carved buttress fair—
So still they blaze when fate is nigh
The lordly line of high Saint Clair.

There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold
Lie buried within that proud chapelle;
Each one the holy vault doth hold—
But the sea holds lovely Rosabelle!

And each Saint Clair was buried there,
With candle, with book, and with knell;
But the sea-caves rung, and the wild winds sung,
The dirge of lovely Rosabelle.

XXIV

So sweet was Harold's piteous lay,
Scarce marked the guests the darkened hall,
Though, long before the sinking day,
A wondrous shade involved them all.
It was not eddying mist or fog,
Drained by the sun from fen or bog;
Of no eclipse had sages told;
And yet, as it came on apace,
Each one could scarce his neighbor's face,
Could scarce his own stretched hand behold.
A secret horror checked the feast,
And chilled the soul of every guest;
Even the high dame stood half aghast,
She knew some evil on the blast;
The elfish page fell to the ground,
And, shuddering, muttered, "Found! found! found!"

XXV

Then sudden through the darkened air
A flash of lightning came;
So broad, so bright, so red the glare,
The castle seemed on flame.
Glanced every rafter of the hall,
Glanced every shield upon the wall;
Each trophied beam, each sculptured stone,
Were instant seen, and instant gone;
Full through the guests' bedazzled band
Resistless flashed the levin-brand,[2]
And filled the hall with smouldering smoke,
As on the elfish page it broke.
It broke with thunder long and loud,
Dismayed the brave, appalled the proud,—
From sea to sea the larum rung;
On Berwick wall, and at Carlisle withal,
To arms the startled warders sprung.
When ended was the dreadful roar,
The elfish dwarf was seen no more!

XXVI

Some heard a voice in Branksome Hall,
Some saw a sight, not seen by all;

[1] pinnacle

[2] thunder-bolt

That dreadful voice was heard by some
Cry, with loud summons, "GYLBIN, COME!"
And on the spot where burst the brand,
Just where the page had flung him down,
Some saw an arm, and some a hand,
And some the waving of a gown.
The guests in silence prayed and shook,
And terror dimmed each lofty look.
But none of all the astonished train
Was so dismayed as Deloraine:
His blood did freeze, his brain did burn,
'Twas feared his mind would ne'er return;
For he was speechless, ghastly, wan,
Like him of whom the story ran,
Who spoke the spectre-hound in Man.
At length by fits he darkly told,
With broken hint and shuddering cold,
That he had seen right certainly
A shape with amice wrapped around,
With a wrought Spanish baldric bound,
Like pilgrim from beyond the sea;
And knew—but how it mattered not—
It was the wizard, Michael Scott.

XXVII

The anxious crowd, with horror pale,
All trembling heard the wondrous tale:
No sound was made, no word was spoke,
Till noble Angus silence broke;
And he a solemn sacred plight
Did to Saint Bride of Douglas make,
That he a pilgrimage would take
To Melrose Abbey, for the sake
Of Michael's restless sprite.
Then each, to each his troubled breast,
To some blest saint his prayers addressed:
Some to Saint Modan made their vows,
Some to Saint Mary of the Lowes,
Some to the Holy Rood of Lisle,
Some to Our Lady of the Isle;
Each did his patron witness make
That he such pilgrimage would take,
And monks should sing and bells should toll,
All for the weal of Michael's soul.
While vows were ta'en and prayers were prayed,
'Tis said the noble dame, dismayed,
Renounced for aye dark magic's aid.

XXVIII

Nought of the bridal will I tell,
Which after in short space befell;
Nor how brave sons and daughters fair
Blessed Teviot's Flower and Cranstoun's heir:
After such dreadful scene 'twere vain
To wake the note of mirth again.
More meet it were to mark the day
Of penitence and prayer divine,
When pilgrim-chiefs, in sad array,
Sought Melrose' holy shrine.

XXIX

With naked foot, and sackcloth vest,
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Did every pilgrim go;
The standers-by might hear uneath [1]
Footstep, or voice, or high-drawn breath,
Through all the lengthened row:
No lordly look nor martial stride;
Gone was their glory, sunk their pride,
Forgotten their renown;
Silent and slow, like ghosts, they glide
To the high altar's hallowed side,
And there they knelt them down.
Above the suppliant chieftains wave
The banners of departed brave;
Beneath the lettered stones were laid
The ashes of their fathers dead;
From many a garnished niche around
Stern saints and tortured martyrs frowned.

XXX

And slow up the dim aisle afar,
With sable cowl and scapular,[2]

[1] scarcely [2] An ecclesiastical garment.

And snow-white stoles, in order due,
The holy fathers, two and two,
In long procession came;
Taper and host and book they bare,
And holy banner, flourished fair
With the Redeemer's name.
Above the prostrate pilgrim band
The mitred abbot stretched his hand,
And blessed them as they kneeled;
With holy cross he signed them all,
And prayed they might be sage in hall
And fortunate in field.
Then mass was sung, and prayers were said,
And solemn requiem for the dead;
And bells tolled out their mighty peal
For the departed spirit's weal;
And ever in the office close
The hymn of intercession rose;
And far the echoing aisles prolong
The awful burden of the song,
DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA,
SOLVET SÆCLUM IN FAVILLA.[1]
While the pealing organ rung.
Were it meet with sacred strain
To close my lay, so light and vain,
Thus the holy father sung:

XXXI

HYMN FOR THE DEAD

That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away,
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

When, shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll,
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead!

O, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be THOU the trembling sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away!

[1] Beginning of a famous medieval Latin hymn. Scott's version that follows is a free paraphrase.

Hushed is the harp—the Minstrel gone.
And did he wander forth alone?
Alone, in indigence and age,
To linger out his pilgrimage?
No: close beneath proud Newark's tower
Arose the Minstrel's lowly bower,
A simple hut; but there was seen
The little garden hedged with green,
The cheerful hearth, and lattice clean.
There sheltered wanderers, by the blaze,
Oft heard the tale of other days;
For much he loved to ope his door,
And give the aid he begged before.
So passed the winter's day; but still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue-bells on Newark heath,
When throstles sung in Harehead-shaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke!
Then would he sing achievements high
And circumstance of chivalry,
Till the rapt traveller would stay,
Forgetful of the closing day;
And noble youths, the strain to hear,
Forsook the hunting of the deer;
And Yarrow, as he rolled along,
Bore burden to the Minstrel's song.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON
(1788–1824)

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

A FABLE

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears.

My limbs are bowed, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are banned, and barred—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffered chains and courted death;
That father perished at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finished as they had begun,
Proud of persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have sealed:
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;—
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and gray,
Dim with a dull imprisoned ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left:
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother drooped and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chained us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fettered in hand, but joined in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound—not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be;
It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven—
For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distressed
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day—
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles, being free)—
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for naught but others' ills,
And then they flowed like mountain rills,

Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorred to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But formed to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perished in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit withered with their clank ,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had followed there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fettered feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman[1] lies by Chillon's walls,
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave inthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave.
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay:
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knocked,
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rocked,
And I have felt it shake, unshocked,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moistened many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died, and they unlocked his chain,
And scooped for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begged them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laughed—and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favorite and the flower,
Most cherished since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyred father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;

[1] Lake of Geneva

He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was withered on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmixed with such—but sure and slow;
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listened, but I could not hear—
I called, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I called, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rushed to him:—I found him not,
I only stirred in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last, the sole, the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.

One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe;
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope—but faith,
And that forbade a selfish [1] death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray;
It was not night—it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;
There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check—no change—no good—no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,

[1] self-inflicted

And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perched, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seemed to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seemed like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile;
I sometimes deemed that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal—well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone,—
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfastened did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun.
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crushed heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barred windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channeled rock and broken bush;

I saw the white-walled distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seemed no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seemed joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppressed,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free;
I asked not why, and recked not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fettered or fetterless to be,
I learned to love despair.
And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watched them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learned to dwell—
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regained my freedom with a sigh.

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge hath wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever-dew,
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful—a faery's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean, and sing
A faery's song.

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna-dew,
And sure in language strange she said
"I love thee true."

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gaz'd and sighed deep,
And there I shut her wild sad eyes—
So kiss'd to sleep.

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd—ah! woe betide!—
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the cold hillside.

I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all:
Who cried—"La belle Dame sans Merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hillside.

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

I

St. Agnes' Eve [1]—Ah, bitter, chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meager, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung:

His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

[1] The evening of January twentieth, the following day being St. Agnes's Day.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,
Star'd, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put crosswise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows, haunting faerily
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the aged creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole bloodthirsty race!

XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursed thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,
We're safe enough; here in this armchair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly arched way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, lattic'd, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom

Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool[1] are weaving piously."

XIV

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an aged crone
Who keepeth closed a wondrous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook,
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his pained heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear."
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woeful, and of such deep sorrowing,

[1] The wool from lambs offered as sacrifice to the church on St. Agnes's Day.

That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd faeries pac'd the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin [1] paid his Demon all the monstrous debt. 171

XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be stored there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame [2]
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head,
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead." 180

XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The Dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her; with aged eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair, 191
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmed maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the aged gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ringdove fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died: 200
She clos'd the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled in her dell.

[1] The famous wizard of Arthurian romance, son of a demon.
[2] frame for embroidery

XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules[1] on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in seaweed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain;
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,

[1] red (in heraldry)

Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnerved arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as iced stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofed phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd "La belle dame sans mercy:"

Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joined hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
How chang'd thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI

Beyond, a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the iced gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unpruned wing."

XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?

Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim,—sav'd by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at hand;—
The bloated wassailers will never heed:—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall,
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide:—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmar'd. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meager face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

THE FAMILIAR ESSAY

The familiar essay, like the lyric poem and the familiar letter, is personal and subjective. Its primary object is not, as in other types of essay, to furnish information, to criticise, or to teach; it is intended to entertain while giving the writer's personal view of his subject and of any aspects of life that the subject may suggest to him. There is always something of the freedom and informality of conversation, and our interest depends not a little upon whether or not we are attracted to the man who is disclosed to us through his writings. The essay may be serious, pathetic, satirical, witty, or playfully humorous in tone, but to succeed as literature it must be stimulating as well as entertaining and must be distinctive in style.

This type of essay was popular during the early nineteenth century, when, in prose as well as in verse, men were writing freely of the things that were closest to their hearts, and revealed themselves as they wrote. Next in significance to the lyrical poetry of the period come the essays of an illustrious group of writers: Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey and Leigh Hunt. Thackeray and Stevenson were among those who carried on the familiar essay during the latter part of the century.

Charles Lamb or "Elia" wrote to gain relief from the tedium of clerical work. He met with courage and self-sacrifice circumstances that would have weighed down many a man, and he had a capacity for enjoying to the full the simpler pleasures that were within his reach. His wide sympathies and charming personality, as well as his appreciation of the noble and beautiful in life have made him one of the best loved of English authors. William Hazlitt spent much of his life in lecturing and writing for periodicals. His critical work shows him to have been a man of strong convictions and prejudices, and in his essays, as Coleridge remarked, "He says things of his own in a way of his own." Leigh Hunt, journalist, wrote interestingly, although his essays do not reveal the depth of thought or feeling of his greater contemporaries.

William Makepeace Thackeray, best known as a novelist, was always essentially an essayist or commentator on life, a shrewd, often satirical observer, and yet a tender-hearted and great-souled man. Robert Louis Stevenson, poet, romancer, and essayist, reveals himself as a genial soul with a wilful perversity that makes his observations on life individual and interesting, in spite of a style that at times seems too self-conscious.

CHARLES LAMB (1775–1834)

DREAM-CHILDREN: A REVERIE

Children love to listen to stories about their elders, when *they* were children; to stretch their imagination to the conception of a traditionary great-uncle or grandame, whom they never saw. It was in this spirit that my little ones crept about me the other evening to hear about their great-grandmother Field, who lived in a great house in Norfolk (a hundred times bigger than that in which they and papa lived) which had been the scene—so at least it was generally believed in that part of the country—of the tragic incidents which they had lately become familiar with from the ballad of the Children in the Wood. Certain it is that the whole story of the children and their cruel uncle was to be seen fairly carved out in wood upon the chimney-piece of the great hall, the whole story down to the Robin Redbreasts, till a foolish rich person pulled it down to set up a marble one of modern invention in its stead, with no story upon it. Here Alice put out one of her dear mother's looks, too tender to be called upbraiding. Then I went on to say, how religious and how good their great-grandmother Field[1] was, how beloved and respected by everybody, though she was not indeed the mistress of this great house, but had only the charge of it (and yet in some respects she might be said to be the mistress of it too) committed to her by the owner, who preferred living in a newer and more fashionable mansion which he had purchased somewhere in the adjoining county; but still she lived in it in a manner as if it had been her own, and kept up the dignity of the great house in a sort while she lived, which afterwards came to decay, and was nearly pulled down, and all its old ornaments stripped and carried away to the owner's other house, where they were set up, and looked as awkward as if some one were to carry away the old tombs they had seen lately at the Abbey, and stick them up in Lady C.'s tawdry gilt drawing-room. Here John smiled, as much as to say, "that would be foolish indeed." And then I told how, when she came to die, her funeral was attended by a concourse of all the poor, and some of the gentry too, of the neighborhood for many miles round, to show their respect for her memory, because she had been such a good and religious woman; so good indeed that she knew all the Psaltery by heart—ay, and a great part of the Testament besides. Here little Alice spread her hands. Then I told what a tall, upright, graceful person their great-grandmother Field once was, and how in her youth she was esteemed the best dancer—here Alice's little right foot played an involuntary movement, till, upon my looking grave, it desisted—the best dancer, I was saying, in the county, till a cruel disease, called a cancer, came, and bowed her down with pain; but it could never bend her good spirits, or make them stoop, but they were still upright, because she was so good and religious. Then I told how she was used to sleep by herself in a lone chamber of the great lone house; and how she believed that an apparition of two infants was to be seen at midnight gliding up and down the great staircase near where she slept, but she said "those innocents would do her no harm"; and how frightened I used to be, though in those days I had my maid to sleep with me, because I was never half so good or religious as she—and yet I never saw the infants. Here John expanded all his eyebrows and tried to look courageous. Then I told how good she was to all her grandchildren, having us to the great

[1] Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, housekeeper for a family in Hertfordshire.

house in the holidays, where I in particular used to spend many hours by myself, in gazing upon the old busts of the Twelve Cæsars, that had been Emperors of Rome, till the old marble heads would seem to live again, or I to be turned into marble with them; how I never could be tired with roaming about that huge mansion, with its vast empty rooms, with their worn-out hangings, fluttering tapestry, and carved oaken panels, with the gilding almost rubbed out—sometimes in the spacious old-fashioned gardens, which I had almost to myself, unless when now and then a solitary gardening man would cross me—and how the nectarines and peaches hung upon the walls, without my ever offering to pluck them, because they were forbidden fruit, unless now and then,—and because I had more pleasure in strolling about among the old melancholy-looking yew trees, or the firs, and picking up the red berries, and the fir-apples, which were good for nothing but to look at—or in lying about upon the fresh grass with all the fine garden smells around me—or basking in the orangery, till I could almost fancy myself ripening too along with the oranges and the limes in that grateful warmth—or in watching the dance that darted to and fro in the fish-pond, at the bottom of the garden, with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked at their impertinent friskings,—I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavors of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such-like common baits of children. Here John slyly deposited back upon the plate a bunch of grapes, which, not unobserved by Alice, he had meditated dividing with her, and both seemed willing to relinquish them for the present as irrelevant. Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone, I told how, though their great-grandmother Field loved all her grandchildren, yet in an especial manner she might be said to love their uncle, John L——,[1] because he was so handsome and spirited a youth, and a king to the rest of us; and, instead of moping about in solitary corners, like some of us, he would mount the most mettlesome horse he could get, when but an imp no bigger than themselves, and make it carry him half over the county in a morning, and join the hunters when there were any out—and yet he loved the old great house and gardens too, but had too much spirit to be always pent up within their boundaries—and how their uncle grew up to man's estate as brave as he was handsome, to the admiration of everybody, but of their great-grandmother Field most especially; and how he used to carry me upon his back when I was a lame-footed boy—for he was a good bit older than me—many a mile when I could not walk for pain;—and how in after life he became lame-footed too, and I did not always (I fear) make allowances enough for him when he was impatient and in pain, nor remember sufficiently how considerate he had been to me when I was lame-footed; and how when he died, though he had not been dead an hour, it seemed as if he had died a great while ago, such a distance there is betwixt life and death; and how I bore his death as I thought pretty well at first, but afterwards it haunted and haunted me; and though I did not cry or take it to heart as some do, and as I think he would have done if I had died, yet I missed him all day long, and knew not till then how much I had loved him. I missed his kindness, and I missed his crossness, and wished him to be alive again, to be quarreling with him (for we quarreled sometimes), rather than not have him again, and was as uneasy without him, as he, their poor uncle, must have

[1] The essayist's brother, John Lamb.

been when the doctor took off his limb. Here the children fell a-crying, and asked if their little mourning which they had on was not for Uncle John, and they looked up, and prayed me not to go on about their uncle, but to tell them some stories about their pretty dead mother. Then I told how for seven long years, in hope sometimes, sometimes in despair, yet persisting ever, I courted the fair Alice W——n; [1] and, as much as children could understand, I explained to them what coyness, and difficulty, and denial meant in maidens—when suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out at her eyes with such a reality of re-presentment, that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose that bright hair was; and while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding, and still receding, till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech; "We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice call Bartrum father. We are nothing, less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been, and must wait upon the tedious shores of Lethe [2] millions of ages before we have existence, and a name"—and immediately awaking, I found myself quietly seated in my bachelor arm-chair, where I had fallen asleep, with the faithful Bridget [3] unchanged by my side—but John L. (or James Elia) was gone for ever.

POOR RELATIONS

A poor Relation—is the most irrelevant thing in nature,—a piece of impertinent correspondency,—an odious approximation,—a haunting conscience,—a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of your prosperity,—an unwelcome remembrancer,—a perpetually recurring mortification,—a drain on your purse,—a more intolerable dun upon your pride,—a drawback upon success,—a rebuke to your rising,—a stain in your blood,—a blot on your 'scutcheon,—a rent in your garment,—a death's head at your banquet,—Agathocles' [4] pot,—a Mordecai [5] in your gate,—a Lazarus at your door,—a lion in your path,—a frog in your chamber,—a fly in your ointment,—a mote in your eye,—a triumph to your enemy, an apology to your friends,—the one thing not needful,—the hail in harvest,—the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

He is known by his knock. Your heart telleth you "That is Mr. ——." A rap, between familiarity and respect; that demands, and, at the same time, seems to despair of, entertainment. He entereth smiling and—embarrassed. He holdeth out his hand to you to shake, and—draweth it back again. He casually looketh in about dinner-time—when the table is full. He offereth to go away, seeing you have company, but is induced to stay. He filleth a chair, and your visitor's two children are accommodated at a side table. He never cometh upon open days, when your wife says with some complacency, "My dear, perhaps Mr. —— will drop in to-day." He remembereth birthdays—and professeth he is fortunate to have stumbled upon one. He declareth against fish, the turbot being small—yet suffereth himself to be importuned into a slice against his first resolution. He sticketh by the port—yet will be prevailed upon to empty the remainder glass of claret, if a stranger press it upon him.

[1] Alice Winterton, a feigned name for a young woman whom Lamb loved.

[2] The river of forgetfulness.

[3] Lamb refers frequently to his sister Mary under this name.

[4] The son of a potter who became ruler of Sicily.

[5] A Jew, whose adopted daughter, Esther, was Queen of Persia. See *Esther* iv, 1-3.

He is a puzzle to the servants, who are fearful of being too obsequious, or not civil enough, to him. The guests think "they have seen him before." Every one speculateth upon his condition; and the most part take him to be—a tide waiter. He calleth you by your Christian name, to imply that his other is the same with your own. He is too familiar by half, yet you wish he had less diffidence. With half the familiarity he might pass for a casual dependant; with more boldness he would be in no danger of being taken for what he is. He is too humble for a friend, yet taketh on him more state than befits a client. He is a worse guest than a country tenant, inasmuch as he bringeth up no rent—yet 'tis odds, from his garb and demeanor, that your guests take him for one. He is asked to make one at the whist table; refuseth on the score of poverty, and—resents being left out. When the company break up he proffereth to go for a coach—and lets the servant go. He recollects your grandfather; and will thrust in some mean and quite unimportant anecdote of—the family. He knew it when it was not quite so flourishing as "he is blest in seeing it now." He reviveth past situations to institute what he calleth—favorable comparisons. With a reflecting sort of congratulation, he will inquire the price of your furniture, and insults you with a special commendation of your window-curtains. He is of opinion that the urn is the more elegant shape, but, after all, there was something more comfortable about the old tea-kettle—which you must remember. He dare say you must find a great convenience in having a carriage of your own, and appealeth to your lady if it is not so. Inquireth if you have had your arms done on vellum yet; and did not know, till lately, that such-and-such had been the crest of the family. His memory is unseasonable; his compliments perverse; his talk a trouble; his stay pertinacious; and when he goeth away, you dismiss his chair into a corner, as precipitately as possible, and feel fairly rid of two nuisances.

There is a worse evil under the sun, and that is—a female Poor Relation. You may do something with the other; you may pass him off tolerably well; but your indigent she-relative is hopeless. "He is an old humorist," you may say, "and affects to go threadbare. His circumstances are better than folks would take them to be. You are fond of having a character at your table, and truly he is one." But in the indications of female poverty there can be no disguise. No woman dresses below herself from caprice. The truth must out without shuffling. "She is plainly related to the L——s; or what does she at their house?" She is, in all probability, your wife's cousin. Nine times out of ten, at least, this is the case. Her garb is something between a gentlewoman and a beggar, yet the former evidently predominates. She is most provokingly humble, and ostentatiously sensible to her inferiority. He may require to be repressed sometimes—*aliquando sufflaminandus erat*—but there is no raising her. You send her soup at dinner, and she begs to be helped—after the gentlemen. Mr. —— requests the honor of taking wine with her; she hesitates between port and madeira, and chooses the former—because he does. She calls the servant *Sir;* and insists on not troubling him to hold her plate. The housekeeper patronizes her. The children's governess takes upon her to correct her, when she has mistaken the piano for a harpsichord.

Richard Amlet, Esq.,[1] in the play, is

[1] A character in *The Confederacy* by Vanbrugh (1672-1726).

a noticeable instance of the disadvantages to which this chimerical notion of *affinity constituting a claim to an acquaintance,* may subject the spirit of a gentleman. A little foolish blood is all that is betwixt him and a lady with a great estate. His stars are perpetually crossed by the malignant maternity of an old woman, who persists in calling him "her son Dick." But she has wherewithal in the end to recompense his indignities, and float him again upon the brilliant surface, under which it had been her seeming business and pleasure all along to sink him. All men, besides, are not of Dick's temperament. I knew an Amlet in real life, who, wanting Dick's buoyancy, sank indeed. Poor W—— was of my own standing at Christ's, a fine classic, and a youth of promise. If he had a blemish, it was too much pride; but its quality was inoffensive; it was not of that sort which hardens the heart, and serves to keep inferiors at a distance; it only sought to ward off derogation from itself. It was the principle of self-respect carried as far as it could go, without infringing upon that respect which he would have every one else equally maintain for himself. He would have you to think alike with him on this topic. Many a quarrel have I had with him, when we were rather older boys, and our tallness made us more obnoxious to observation in the blue clothes, because I would not thread the alleys and blind ways of the town with him to elude notice, when we have been out together on a holiday in the streets of this sneering and prying metropolis. W—— went, sore with these notions, to Oxford, where the dignity and sweetness of a scholar's life, meeting with the alloy of a humble introduction, wrought in him a passionate devotion to the place, with a profound aversion to the society. The servitor's gown (worse than his school array) clung to him with Nessian[1] venom. He thought himself ridiculous in a garb, under which Latimer[2] must have walked erect; and in which Hooker,[3] in his young days, possibly flaunted in a vein of no discommendable vanity. In the depths of college shades, or in his lonely chamber, the poor student shrunk from observation. He found shelter among books, which insult not; and studies, that ask no questions of a youth's finances. He was lord of his library, and seldom cared for looking out beyond his domains. The healing influence of studious pursuits was upon him, to soothe and to abstract. He was almost a healthy man; when the waywardness of his fate broke out against him with a second and worse malignity. The father of W—— had hitherto exercised the humble profession of housepainter at N——, near Oxford. A supposed interest with some of the heads of colleges had now induced him to take up his abode in that city, with the hope of being employed upon some public works which were talked of. From that moment I read in the countenance of the young man the determination which at length tore him from academical pursuits for ever. To a person unacquainted with our universities, the distance between the gownsmen and the townsmen, as they are called—the trading part of the latter especially—is carried to an excess that would appear harsh and incredible. The temperament of W——'s father was diametrically the reverse of his own. Old W—— was a little, busy, cringing tradesman, who, with his son upon his arm, would stand bowing and scraping, cap

[1] A centaur slain by Hercules. Before his death he told the wife of Hercules that if she dipped her husband's shirt in his blood it would preserve Hercules' love for her. The shirt, however, poisoned Hercules.

[2] Bishop Latimer (1485-1555) wore a servitor's gown at Cambridge.

[3] Richard Hooker (1553-1600), the famous theologian, had studied at Oxford.

in hand, to anything that wore the semblance of a gown—insensible to the winks and open remonstrances of the young man, to whose chamber-fellow, or equal in standing, perhaps, he was thus obsequiously and gratuitously ducking. Such a state of things could not last. W—— must change the air of Oxford or be suffocated. He chose the former; and let the sturdy moralist, who strains the point of the filial duties as high as they can bear, censure the dereliction; he cannot estimate the struggle. I stood with W——, the last afternoon I ever saw him, under the eaves of his paternal dwelling. It was in the fine lane leading from the High Street to the back of **** college, where W—— kept his rooms. He seemed thoughtful, and more reconciled. I ventured to rally him—finding him in a better mood—upon a representation of the Artist Evangelist,[1] which the old man, whose affairs were beginning to flourish, had caused to be set up in a splendid sort of frame over his really handsome shop, either as a token of prosperity, or badge of gratitude to his saint. W—— looked up at the Luke, and, like Satan, "knew his mounted sign—and fled." A letter on his father's table the next morning, announced that he had accepted a commission in a regiment about to embark for Portugal. He was among the first who perished before the walls of St. Sebastian.[2]

I do not know how, upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful; but this theme of poor relationship is replete with so much matter for tragic as well as comic associations, that it is difficult to keep the account distinct without blending. The earliest impressions which I received on this matter, are certainly not attended with anything painful, or very humiliating, in the recalling. At my father's table (no very splendid one) was to be found, every Saturday, the mysterious figure of an aged gentleman, clothed in neat black, of a sad yet comely appearance. His deportment was of the essence of gravity; his words few or none; and I was not to make a noise in his presence. I had little inclination to have done so—for my cue was to admire in silence. A particular elbow chair was appropriated to him, which was in no case to be violated. A peculiar sort of sweet pudding, which appeared on no other occasion, distinguished the days of his coming. I used to think him a prodigiously rich man. All I could make out of him was, that he and my father had been schoolfellows a world ago at Lincoln, and that he came from the Mint. The Mint I knew to be a place where all the money was coined—and I thought he was the owner of all that money. Awful ideas of the Tower twined themselves about his presence. He seemed above human infirmities and passions. A sort of melancholy grandeur invested him. From some inexplicable doom I fancied him obliged to go about in an eternal suit of mourning; a captive—a stately being, let out of the Tower on Saturdays. Often have I wondered at the temerity of my father, who, in spite of an habitual general respect which we all in common manifested towards him, would venture now and then to stand up against him in some argument touching their youthful days. The houses of the ancient city of Lincoln are divided (as most of my readers know) between the dwellers on the hill, and in the valley. This marked distinction formed an obvious division between the boys who lived above (however brought together in a common school) and the boys whose paternal residence was on the plain; a sufficient cause of

[1] St. Luke

[2] In Spain, captured by the Duke of Wellington in 1813.

hostlity in the code of these young Grotiuses.[1] My father had been a leading Mountaineer; and would still maintain the general superiority, in skill and hardihood, of the *Above Boys* (his own faction) over the *Below Boys* (so were they called), of which party his contemporary had been a chieftain. Many and hot were the skirmishes on this topic—the only one upon which the old gentleman was ever brought out—and bad blood bred; even sometimes almost to the recommencement (so I expected) of actual hostilities. But my father, who scorned to insist upon advantages, generally contrived to turn the conversation upon some adroit bycommendation of the old minster; in the general preference of which, before all other cathedrals in the island, the dweller on the hill, and the plain-born, could meet on a conciliating level, and lay down their less important differences. Once only I saw the old gentleman really ruffled, and I remembered with anguish the thought that came over me: "Perhaps he will never come here again." He had been pressed to take another plate of the viand, which I have already mentioned as the indispensable concomitant of his visits. He had refused with a resistance amounting to rigor, when my aunt—an old Lincolnian, but who had something of this in common with my cousin Bridget, that she would sometimes press civility out of season—uttered the following memorable application—"Do take another slice, Mr. Billet, for you do not get pudding every day." The old gentleman said nothing at the time—but he took occasion in the course of the evening, when some argument had intervened between them, to utter with an emphasis which chilled the company, and which chills me now as I write it—"Woman, you are superannuated." John Billet did not survive long, after the digesting of this affront; but he survived long enough to assure me that peace was actually restored; and, if I remember aright, another pudding was discreetly substituted in the place of that which had occasioned the offence. He died at the Mint (anno 1781) where he had long held what he accounted a comfortable independence; and with five pounds, fourteen shillings, and a penny, which were found in his escritoire after his decease, left the world, blessing God that he had enough to bury him, and that he had never been obliged to any man for a sixpence. This was—a Poor Relation.

[1] Grotius was a famous Dutch jurist, credited with having established a system of international law.

A DISSERTATION UPON ROAST PIG

Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend M.[2] was obliging enough to read and explain to me, for the first seventy thousand ages ate their meat raw, clawing or biting it from the living animal, just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. This period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius[3] in the second chapter of his Mundane Mutations, where he designates a kind of golden age by the term Cho-fang, literally the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes on to say that the art of roasting, or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The swine-herd, Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which kindling

[2] Thomas Manning

[3] The great Chinese philosopher, who lived about B.C. 550-478.

quickly, spread the conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage (a sorry antediluvian makeshift of a building, you may think it), what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East from the remotest periods that we read of. Bo-bo was in utmost consternation, as you may think, not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or two, at any time, as for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils, unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from?—not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young firebrand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb, weed, or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next stooped down to feel the pig, if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them he applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it) he tasted—*crackling!* Again he felt and fumbled at the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so, and the pig that tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself up to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly fashion, when his sire entered amid the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued.

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring? Is it not enough that you have burnt me down three houses with your dog's tricks, and be hanged to you! but you must be eating fire, and I know not what—what have you got there, I say?"

"O, father, the pig, the pig! do come and taste how nice the burnt pig eats."

The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig, and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, still shouting out "Eat, eat, eat the burnt pig, father, only taste—O Lord!"—with such-like barbarous ejaculations, cramming all the while as if he would choke.

Ho-ti trembled every joint while he grasped the abominable thing, wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling scorching his fingers,

as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn tasted some of its flavor, which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretence, proved not altogether displeasing to him. In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly set down to the mess, and never left off till they had despatched all that remained of the litter.

Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches, who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them. Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's cottage was burnt down now more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more indulgent to him than ever. At length they were watched, the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given, the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, might be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers, as Bo-bo and his father had done before them, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy, against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge which judge had ever given,—to the surprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present—without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of Not Guilty.

The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision: and when the court was dismissed, went privily and bought up all the pigs that could be had for love or money. In a few days his Lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing, and now there was nothing to be seen but fires in every direction. Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices one and all shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus this custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke,[1] who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (*burnt*, as they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of a gridiron. Roasting by the string, or spit, came in a century or two later, I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious, arts make their way among mankind.——

Without placing too implicit faith in the account above given, it must be agreed, that if a worthy pretext for so dangerous an experiment as setting houses on fire (especially in these days) could be assigned in favor of any culinary object, that pretext and excuse might be found in ROAST PIG.

Of all the delicacies in the whole *mundus edibilis*,[2] I will maintain it to be the most delicate—*princeps obsoniorum*.[3]

I speak not of your grown porkers—

[1] John Locke (1632-1704), author of *Essay on Human Understanding.*

[2] world of eatables

[3] prince of foods

things between pig and pork—those hobbydehoys—but a young and tender suckling—under a moon old—guiltless as yet of the sty—with no original speck of the *amor immunditiæ*,[1] the hereditary failing of the first parent, yet manifest—his voice as yet not broken, but something between a childish treble and a grumble—the mild forerunner, or *præludium*, of a grunt.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavor comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, *crackling*, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig's yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

Behold him while he is doing—it seemeth rather a refreshing warmth than a scorching heat that he is so passive to. How equably he twirleth round the string!—Now he is just done. To see the extreme sensibility of that tender age, he hath wept out his pretty eyes—radiant jellies—shooting stars.—

See him in the dish, his second cradle, how meek he lieth!—wouldst thou have had this innocent grow up to the grossness and indocility which too often accompany maturer swinehood? Ten to one he would have proved a glutton, a sloven, an obstinate, disagreeable animal—wallowing in all manner of filthy conversation—from these sins he is happily snatched away—

> Ere sin could blight, or sorrow fade,
> Death came with timely care——[2]

his memory is odoriferous—no clown curseth, while his stomach half rejecteth, the rank bacon—no coal-heaver bolteth him in reeking sausages—he hath a fair sepulchre in the grateful stomach of the judicious epicure—and for such a tomb might be content to die.

He is the best of sapors. Pine-apple is great. She is indeed almost too transcendent—a delight, if not sinful, yet so like to sinning, that really a tender-conscienced person would do well to pause—too ravishing for mortal taste, she woundeth and excoriateth the lips that approach her—like lovers' kisses, she biteth—she is a pleasure bordering on pain from the fierceness and insanity of her relish—but she stoppeth at the palate—she meddleth not with the appetite—and the coarsest hunger might barter her consistently for a mutton chop.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong man may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

Unlike to mankind's mixed characters, a bundle of virtues and vices, inexplicably intertwisted, and not to be unravelled without hazard, he is—good throughout. No part of him is better or worse than another. He helpeth, as far as his little means extend, all around. He is the least envious of banquets. He is all neighbors' fare.

I am one of those who freely and un-

[1] love of uncleanness

[2] From *Epitaph on an Infant* by S. T. Coleridge.

grudgingly impart a share of the good things of this life which fall to their lot (few as mine are in this kind) to a friend. I protest I take as great an interest in my friend's pleasures, his relishes, and proper satisfactions, as in mine own. "Presents," I often say, "endear absents." Hares, pheasants, partridges, snipes, barn-door chickens (those "tame villatic fowl") capons, plovers, brawn, barrels of oysters, I dispense as freely as I receive them. I love to taste them, as it were, upon the tongue of my friend. But a stop must be put somewhere. One would not, like Lear, "give everything." I make my stand upon pig. Methinks it is an ingratitude to the Giver of all good flavors, to extra-domiciliate, or send out of the house, slightingly (under pretext of friendship, or I know not what), a blessing so particularly adapted, predestined, I may say, to my individual palate.—It argues an insensibility.

I remember a touch of conscience in this kind at school. My good old aunt, who never parted from me at the end of a holiday without stuffing a sweetmeat or some nice thing into my pocket, had dismissed me one evening with a smoking plum-cake, fresh from the oven. In my way to school (it was over London Bridge) a grey-headed old beggar saluted me (I have no doubt, at this time of day, that he was a counterfeit). I had no pence to console him with, and in the vanity of self-denial, and the very coxcombry of charity, school-boy like, I made him a present of—the whole cake! I walked on a little, buoyed up, as one is on such occasions, with a sweet soothing of self-satisfaction; but before I had got to the end of the bridge, my better feelings returned, and I burst into tears, thinking how ungrateful I had been to my good aunt, to go and give her good gift away to a stranger, that I had never seen before, and who might be a bad man for aught I knew; and then I thought of the pleasure my aunt would be taking in thinking that I—I myself, and not another—would eat her nice cake—and what should I say to her the next time I saw her—how naughty I was to part with her pretty present!—and the odor of that spicy cake came back upon my recollection, and the pleasure and the curiosity I had taken in seeing her make it, and her joy when she sent it to the oven, and how disappointed she would feel that I had never had a bit of it in my mouth at last—and I blamed my impertinent spirit of alms-giving, and out-of-place hypocrisy of goodness; and above all I wished never to see the face again of that insidious, good-for-nothing, old gray impostor.

Our ancestors were nice in their method of sacrificing these tender victims. We read of pigs whipt to death with something of a shock, as we hear of any other obsolete custom. The age of discipline is gone by, or it would be curious to inquire (in a philosophical light merely) what effect this process might have towards intenerating and dulcifying a substance, naturally so mild and dulcet as the flesh of young pigs. It looks like refining a violet. Yet we should be cautious, while we condemn the inhumanity, how we censure the wisdom of the practice. It might impart a gusto.—

I remember an hypothesis, argued upon by the young students, when I was at St. Omer's,[1] and maintained with much learning and pleasantry on both sides, "Whether, supposing that the flavor of a pig who obtained his death by whipping (*per flagellationem extremam*) superadded a pleasure upon the palate of a man more intense than any possible suffering we can conceive in the animal, is man justified in using that method of putting the animal to death?" I forget the decision.

[1] A Roman Catholic college in France.

His sauce should be considered. Decidedly, a few bread crumbs, done up with his liver and brains, and a dash of mild sage. But, banish, dear Mrs. Cook, I beseech you, the whole onion tribe. Barbecue your whole hogs to your palate, steep them in shalots, stuff them out with plantations of the rank and guilty garlic; you cannot poison them, or make them stronger than they are—but consider, he is a weakling—a flower.

OLD CHINA

I have an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I inquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that, under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue,—which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin,[1] handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.[2]

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.[3]

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson[4] (which we are old-fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula*[5] upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favorable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshade the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.[6]

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were not quite so rich. I do not mean that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state"—so she was pleased to ramble on—"in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and oh! how

[1] A Chinese official.
[2] An old English dance.
[3] China
[4] A green tea.
[5] beautiful wonders
[6] See above, p. 733, note 3.

much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!)—we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher,[1] which you dragged home late at night from Barker's[2] in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington,[3] fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating*, you called it) —and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen —or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo,[4] which we christened the 'Lady Blanch;' when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's,[5] and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield,[6] and Potter's Bar,[6] and Waltham,[6] when we had a holiday—holidays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little hand-basket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savory cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house where we might go in and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a table-cloth—and wish for such another honest hostess as Izaak Walton[7] has described many a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea,[8] when he went a-fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now,—when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom, moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—

[1] Two Elizabethan dramatists who wrote in collaboration.
[2] An old London bookshop.
[3] A district in the north of London.
[4] Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).
[5] An art connoisseur in London.
[6] Suburbs to the north of London.
[7] Author of *The Compleat Angler*.
[8] A branch of the Thames.

which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage and a precarious welcome.

"You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham* [1] and the *Surrender of Calais*,[1] and Bannister [2] and Mrs. Bland [2] in the *Children in the Wood* [3]—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with Rosalind in Arden,[4] or with Viola at the Court of Illyria? [5] You used to say, that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough—but there was still a law of civility to woman recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

"There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can you have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people, living together as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologizes, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never *do* make much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet,—and much ado we used to have every thirty-first night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then,—betwixt ways, and

[1] Comedies by George Colman (1762-1836).
[2] A popular actor and actress in the early years of the nineteenth century.
[3] A comedy by Thomas Morton (1764-1838).
[4] In Shakespeare's *As You Like It.*
[5] In *Twelfth Night.*

projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now), we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton,*[1] as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of a poor———hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straighten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked: live better, and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fireside, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe,* which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theater down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in than Crœsus had, or the great Jew R——[2] is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half-Madona-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

[1] Charles Cotton, a poet (1630-1687).

THE SUPERANNUATED MAN

Sera tamen respexit
Libertas. —*Virgil.*[3]

A Clerk I was in London gay.
—*O'Keefe.*[4]

If peradventure, reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life—thy shining youth—in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite; to

[2] Rothschild

[3] Though late, liberty yet looked back upon me (from Virgil's first Eclogue).

[4] An Irish playwright (1747-1833).

have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then, and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance.

It is now six-and-thirty years since I took my seat at the desk in Mincing Lane. Melancholy was the transition at fourteen from the abundant playtime, and the frequently intervening vacations of school days, to the eight, nine, and sometimes ten hours' a-day attendance at a counting-house. But time partially reconciles us to anything. I gradually became contented—doggedly contented, as wild animals in cages.

It is true I had my Sundays to myself; but Sundays, admirable as the institution of them is for purposes of worship, are for that very reason the very worst adapted for days of unbending and recreation. In particular, there is a gloom for me attendant upon a city Sunday, a weight in the air. I miss the cheerful cries of London, the music and the ballad-singers—the buzz and stirring murmur of the streets. Those eternal bells depress me. The closed shops repel me. Prints, pictures, all the glittering and endless succession of knacks and gewgaws, and ostentatiously displayed wares of tradesmen, which make a week-day saunter through the less busy parts of the metropolis so delightful—are shut out. No book-stalls deliciously to idle over, no busy faces to re-create the idle man who contemplates them ever passing by—the very face of business a charm by contrast to his temporary relaxation from it. Nothing to be seen but unhappy countenances—or half-happy at best—of emancipated 'prentices and little tradesfolks, with here and there a servant maid that has got leave to go out, who, slaving all the week, with the habit has lost almost the capacity of enjoying a free hour, and livelily expressing the hollowness of a day's pleasuring. The very strollers in the fields on that day look anything but comfortable.

But besides Sundays, I had a day at Easter and a day at Christmas, with a full week in the summer to go and air myself in my native fields of Hertfordshire. This last was a great indulgence, and the prospect of its recurrence, I believe, alone kept me up through the year, and made my durance tolerable. But when the week came round, did the glittering phantom of the distance keep touch with me? or rather was it not a series of seven uneasy days, spent in restless pursuit of pleasure, and a wearisome anxiety to find out how to make the most of them? Where was the quiet, where the promised rest? Before I had a taste of it, it was vanished. I was at the desk again, counting upon the fifty-one tedious weeks that must intervene before such another snatch would come. Still the prospect of its coming threw something of an illumination upon the darker side of my captivity. Without it, as I have said, I could scarcely have sustained my thraldom.

Independently of the rigors of attendance, I have ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps a mere caprice) of incapacity for business. This, during my latter years, had increased to such a degree, that it was visible in all the lines of my countenance. My health and my good spirits flagged. I had perpetually a dread of some crisis, to which I should be found unequal. Besides my daylight servitude, I served over again all night in my sleep, and would awake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in my accounts, and the like. I was fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. I had grown to my desk, as it were, and the wood had entered into my soul.

My fellows in the office would some-

times rally me upon the trouble legible in my countenance, but I did not know that it had raised the suspicions of any of my employers, when, on the 5th of last month, a day ever to be remembered by me, L——,[1] the junior partner in the firm, calling me on one side, directly taxed me with my bad looks, and frankly inquired the cause of them. So taxed, I honestly made confession of my infirmity, and added that I was afraid I should eventually be obliged to resign his service. He spoke some words of course to hearten me, and there the matter rested. A whole week I remained laboring under the impression that I had acted imprudently in my disclosure; that I had foolishly given a handle against myself, and had been anticipating my own dismissal. A week passed in this manner, the most anxious one, I verily believe, in my whole life, when on the evening of the 12th of April, just as I was about quitting my desk to go home (it might be about eight o'clock) I received an awful summons to attend the presence of the whole assembled firm in the formidable back parlor. I thought, Now my time is surely come, I have done for myself; I am going to be told that they have no longer occasion for me. L——, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me, —when to my utter astonishment B——,[2] the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes after eight I went home—for ever. This noble benefit—gratitude forbids me to conceal their names—I owe to the kindness of the most munificent firm in the world—the house of Boldero, Merryweather, Bosanquet, and Lacy,[3]

Esto perpetua![4]

For the first day or two I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing that I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the Old Bastile,[5] suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarce trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of Time into Eternity—for it is a sort of Eternity for a man to have his Time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage. From a poor man, poor in Time, I was suddenly lifted up into a vast revenue; I could see no end of my possessions; I wanted some steward or judicious bailiff, to manage my estates in Time for me. And here let me caution persons grown old in active business, not lightly, nor without weighing their own resources, to forego their customary employment all at once, for there may be danger in it. I feel it by myself, but I know that my resources are sufficient; and now that those first giddy

[1] Lacy, referred to later in the essay.
[2] Boldero, mentioned later.
[3] fictitious names
[4] may it be perpetual
[5] The prison in Paris, destroyed during the French Revolution.

raptures have subsided, I have a quiet home-feeling of the blessedness of my condition. I am in no hurry. Having all holidays, I am as though I had none. If Time hung heavy upon me, I could walk it away; but I do *not* walk all day long, as I used to do in those old transient holidays, thirty miles a day, to make the most of them. If Time were troublesome, I could read it away; but I do *not* read in that violent measure, with which, having no Time my own but candlelight Time, I used to weary out my head and eye-sight in by-gone winters. I walk, read, or scribble (as now) just when the fit seizes me. I no longer hunt after pleasure; I let it come to me. I am like the man

> ——that's born, and has his years come to him,
> In some green desert.[1]

"Years," you will say; "what is this superannuated simpleton calculating upon? He has already told us he is past fifty."

I have indeed lived nominally fifty years, but deduct out of them the hours which I have lived to other people, and not to myself, and you will find me still a young fellow. For *that* is the only true Time, which a man can properly call his own, that which he has all to himself; the rest, though in some sense he may be said to live it, is other people's time, not his. The remnant of my poor days, long or short, is at least multiplied for me threefold. My ten next years, if I stretch so far, will be as long as any preceding thirty. 'Tis a fair rule-of-three sum.

Among the strange fantasies which beset me at the commencement of my freedom, and of which all traces are not yet gone, one was that a vast tract of time had intervened since I quitted the counting house. I could not conceive of it as an affair of yesterday. The partners, and the clerks with whom I had for so many years, and for so many hours in each day of the year, been so closely associated—being suddenly removed from them—they seemed as dead to me. There is a fine passage, which may serve to illustrate this fancy, in a tragedy, by Sir Robert Howard, speaking of a friend's death:

> ——'Twas but just now he went away;
> I have not since had time to shed a tear:
> And yet the distance does the same appear
> As if he had been a thousand years from me.
> Time takes no measure in Eternity.[2]

To dissipate this awkward feeling, I have been fain to go among them once or twice since; to visit my old desk-fellows —my co-brethren of the quill—that I had left below in the state militant. Not all the kindness with which they received me could quite restore to me that pleasant familiarity which I had heretofore enjoyed among them. We cracked some of our old jokes, but methought they went off but faintly. My old desk, the peg where I hung my hat, were appropriated to another. I knew it must be, but I could not take it kindly. D——l take me if I did not feel some remorse—beast if I had not—at quitting my old compeers, the faithful partners of my toils for six and thirty years, that smoothed for me with their jokes and conundrums the ruggedness of my professional road. Had it been so rugged then after all? or was I a coward simply? Well, it is too late to repent; and I also know that these suggestions are a common fallacy of the mind on such occasions. But my heart smote me. I had violently broken the bands betwixt us. It was at least not courteous. I shall be some time before I get quite reconciled to the separation. Farewell, old cronies, yet not for long,

[1] Inaccurately quoted from *Mayor of Queenboro*, by Thomas Middleton.

[2] From Sir Robert Howard's *The Vestal Virgin, or the Roman Ladies.*

for again and again I will come among ye, if I shall have your leave. Farewell, Ch——, dry, sarcastic, and friendly! Do——, mild, slow to move, and gentlemanly! Pl——, officious to do, and to volunteer good services!—and thou, thou dreary pile, fit mansion for a Gresham [1] or a Whittington [2] of old stately House of merchants; with thy labyrinthine passages, and light-excluding, pent-up offices, where candles for one half the year supplied the place of the sun's light; unhealthy contributor to my weal, stern fosterer of my living, farewell! In thee remain, and not in the obscure collection of some wandering bookseller, my "works"! There let them rest, as I do from my labors, piled on thy massy shelves, more MSS. in folio than ever Aquinas left, and full as useful! My mantle I bequeath among ye.

A fortnight has passed since the date of my first communication. At that period I was approaching to tranquillity, but had not reached it. I boasted of a calm indeed, but it was comparative only. Something of the first flutter was left; an unsettling sense of novelty; the dazzle to weak eyes of unaccustomed light. I missed my old chains, forsooth, as if they had been some necessary part of my apparel. I was a poor Carthusian,[3] from strict cellular discipline suddenly by some revolution returned upon the world. I am now as if I had never been other than my own master. It is natural to me to go where I please, to do what I please. I find myself at eleven o'clock in the day in Bond Street, and it seems to me that I have been sauntering there at that very hour for years past. I digress into Soho to explore a book-stall. Methinks I have been thirty years a collector. There is nothing strange nor new in it. I find myself before a fine picture in the morning. Was it ever otherwise? What is become of Fish Street Hill? Where is Fenchurch Street? Stones of old Mincing Lane, which I have worn with my daily pilgrimage for six and thirty years, to the footsteps of what toil-worn clerk are your everlasting flints now vocal? I indent the gayer flags of Pall Mall. It is 'Change time, and I am strangely among the Elgin marbles.[4] It was no hyperbole when I ventured to compare the change in my condition to a passing into another world. Time stands still in a manner to me. I have lost all distinction of season. I do not know the day of the week, or of the month. Each day used to be individually felt by me in its reference to the foreign post days; in its distance from, or propinquity to, the next Sunday. I had my Wednesday feelings, my Saturday night's sensations. The genius of each day was upon me distinctly during the whole of it, affecting my appetite, spirits, &c. The phantom of the next day, with the dreary five to follow, sate as a load upon my poor Sabbath recreations. What charm has washed the Ethiop white? What is gone of Black Monday? All days are the same. Sunday itself—that unfortunate failure of a holiday, as it too often proved, what with my sense of its fugitiveness, and over-care to get the greatest quantity of pleasure out of it—is melted down into a week day. I can spare to go to church now, without grudging the huge cantle which it used to seem to cut out of the holiday. I have Time for everything. I can visit a sick friend. I can interrupt the man of much occupation when he is busiest. I can insult over him with an invitation to take a day's pleasure with me to Windsor this fine May morning. It is Lucretian pleasure to behold the poor drudges, whom I have left behind in the

[1] Sir Thomas Gresham, founder of the Royal Exchange.

[2] A famous mayor of London, who had been a poor boy.

[3] A monk, member of the Carthusian order.

[4] Greek sculptures, brought to England by Lord Elgin early in the nineteenth century.

world, carking and caring, like horses in a mill, drudging on in the same eternal round—and what is it all for? A man can never have too much time to himself, nor too little to do. Had I a little son, I would christen him NOTHING-TO-DO; he should do nothing. Man, I verily believe, is out of his element as long as he is operative. I am altogether for the life contemplative. Will no kindly earthquake come and swallow up those accursed cotton mills? Take me that lumber of a desk there, and bowl it down

> As low as to the fiends.[1]

I am no longer —— ——, clerk to the firm of, &c. I am Retired Leisure. I am to be met with in trim gardens. I am already come to be known by my vacant face and careless gesture, perambulating at no fixed pace, nor with any settled purpose. I walk about, not to and from. They tell me a certain *cum dignitate*[2] air, that has been buried so long with my other good parts, has begun to shoot forth in my person. I grow into gentility perceptibly. When I take up a newspaper it is to read the state of the opera. *Opus operatum est.*[3] I have done all that I came into this world to do. I have worked task-work, and have the rest of the day to myself.

WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778–1830)

ON GOING A JOURNEY

One of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

> The fields his study, nature was his book.[4]

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedgerows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room, and fewer incumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude; nor do I ask for

> ——a friend in my retreat,
> Whom I may whisper, solitude is sweet.[5]

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing-space to muse on indifferent matters, where Contemplation

> May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
> That in the various bustle of resort
> Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,[6]

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with, and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start

[1] From Shakespeare's *Hamlet.*
[2] Dignified, with reference to Cicero's phrase, *otium cum dignitate,* dignified leisure.
[3] The work has been accomplished.
[4] From Bloomfield's *The Farmer's Boy.*
[5] From Cowper's *Retirement.*
[6] From Milton's *Comus.*

some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like "sunken wrack and sumless treasuries," burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. "Leave, oh, leave me to my repose!" I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you, but is with me "very stuff of the conscience." Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship," say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's [1] that "he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time." So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. "Let me have a companion of my way," says Sterne,[2] "were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." It is beautifully said: but in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the involuntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for the synthetical method on a journey in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomize them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean-field crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveler has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the color of a cloud which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably

[1] William Cobbett (1762-1835), an essayist.

[2] Laurence Sterne (1713-68), the author of *Tristram Shandy*.

produces ill-humor. Now I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company seems extravagance or affectation; and, on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered) is a task to which few are competent. We must "give it an understanding, but no tongue." My old friend, C——,[1] however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale, a summer's day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. "He talked far above singing." If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden. They had "that fine madness in them which our first poets had;" and if they could have been caught by some rare instrument, would have breathed such strains as the following:—

——Here be woods as green
As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet
As when smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
Face of the curled streams, with flow'rs as many
As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;
Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
Arbors o'ergrown with woodbines, caves and dells;
Choose where thou wilt, while I sit by and sing,
Or gather rushes to make many a ring
For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,
How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies;
How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,
His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,
Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
To kiss her sweetest.

FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS.[2]

Had I words and images at command like these, I would attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds: but at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot:—I must have time to collect myself.—

In general, a good thing spoils out-of-door prospects: it should be reserved for Table-talk. L——[3] is for this reason, I take it, the worst company in the world out of doors; because he is the best within. I grant, there is one subject on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night. The open air improves this sort of conversation or friendly altercation, by setting a keener edge on appetite. Every mile of the road heightens the flavor of the viands we expect at the end of it. How fine it is to enter some old town, walled and turreted, just at the approach of nightfall, or to come to some straggling village, with the lights streaming through the surrounding gloom; and then, after inquiring for the best entertainment that the place affords, to "take one's ease at one's inn!" These eventful moments in our lives' history are too precious, too full of solid, heartfelt happiness to be frittered and dribbled away in imperfect sympathy. I would have them all to myself, and drain them to the

[1] S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834), poet and philosopher.

[2] By John Fletcher

[3] Charles Lamb

last drop: they will do to talk of or to write about afterwards. What a delicate speculation it is, after drinking whole goblets of tea,

> The cups that cheer, but not inebriate,

and letting the fumes ascend into the brain, to sit considering what we shall have for supper—eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal cutlet! Sancho in such a situation once fixed upon cow-heel; and his choice, though he could not help it, is not to be disparaged. Then in the intervals of pictured scenery and Shandean contemplation, to catch the preparation and the stir in the kitchen. *Procul, O procul este profani!* [1] These hours are sacred to silence and to musing, to be treasured up in the memory, and to feed the source of smiling thoughts hereafter. I would not waste them in idle talk; or if I must have the integrity of fancy broken in upon, I would rather it were by a stranger than a friend. A stranger takes his hue and character from the time and place; he is a part of the furniture and costume of an inn. If he is a Quaker, or from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so much the better. I do not even try to sympathize with him, and he breaks no squares. I associate nothing with my traveling companion but present objects and passing events. In his ignorance of me and my affairs, I in a manner forget myself. But a friend reminds one of other things, rips up old grievances, and destroys the abstraction of the scene. He comes in ungraciously between us and our imaginary character. Something is dropped in the course of conversation that gives a hint of your profession and pursuits; or from having someone with you that knows the less sublime portions of your history, it seems that other people do. You are no longer a citizen of the world: but your "unhoused free condition is put into circumscription and confine." The *incognito* of an inn is one of its striking privileges—"lord of one's self, uncumber'd with a name." Oh! it is great to shake off the trammels of the world and of public opinion—to lose our importunate, tormenting, everlasting personal identity in the elements of nature, and become the creature of the moment, clear of all ties—to hold to the universe only by a dish of sweetbreads, and to owe nothing but the score of the evening—and no longer seeking for applause and meeting with contempt, to be known by no other title than *the Gentleman in the parlor!* One may take one's choice of all characters in this romantic state of uncertainty as to one's real pretensions, and become indefinitely respectable and negatively right-worshipful. We baffle prejudice and disappoint conjecture, and from being so to others, begin to be objects of curiosity and wonder even to ourselves. We are no more those hackneyed commonplaces that we appear in the world: an inn restores us to the level of nature, and quits scores with society! I have certainly spent some enviable hours at inns—sometimes when I have been left entirely to myself, and have tried to solve some metaphysical problem, as once at Witham-common, where I found out the proof that likeness is not a case of the association of ideas—at other times, when there have been pictures in the room, as at St. Neot's (I think it was), where I first met with Gribelin's engravings [2] of the Cartoons, into which I entered at once, and at a little inn on the borders of Wales, where there happened to be hanging some of the Westall's drawings, which I compared triumphantly (for a theory that I had, not for the admired artist) with the

[1] Keep your distance, profane souls.

[2] Engravings of Raphael's cartoons published by Simon Gribelin (1661-1733).

figure of a girl who had ferried me over the Severn, standing up in a boat between me and the twilight—at other times I might mention luxuriating in books, with a peculiar interest in this way, as I remember sitting up half the night to read *Paul and Virginia,*[1] which I picked up at an inn at Bridgewater, after being drenched in the rain all day; and at the same place I got through two volumes of Madam D'Arblay's *Camilla.*[2] It was on the 10th of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the *New Eloise,*[3] at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bon bouche*[4] to crown the evening with. It was my birthday, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighborhood to visit this delightful spot. The road to Llangollen turns off between Chirk and Wrexham; and on passing a certain point, you come all at once upon the valley, which opens like an amphitheater, broad, barren hills rising in majestic state on either side, with "green upland swells that echo to the bleat of flocks" below, and the river Dee babbling over its stony bed in the midst of them. The valley at this time "glittered green with sunny showers," and a budding ash-tree dipped its tender branches in the chiding stream. How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines which I have just quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems! But besides the prospect which opened beneath my feet, another also opened to my inward sight, a heavenly vision, on which were written, in letters large as Hope could make them, these four words, LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE; which have since faded into the light of common day, or mock my idle gaze.

The beautiful is vanished, and returns not.

Still I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot; but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself, so much have they been broken and defaced! I could stand on some tall rock, and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet whom I have above named. Where is he now? Not only I myself have changed; the world, which was then new to me, has become old and incorrigible. Yet will I turn to thee in thought, O sylvan Dee, in joy, in youth and gladness as thou then wert; and thou shalt always be to me the river of Paradise, where I will drink of the waters of life freely!

There is hardly anything that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than traveling does. With change of place we change our ideas; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can by any effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time. The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it: the

[1] A novel by St. Pierre, published in 1788.
[2] A novel by Fanny Burney, published in 1796.
[3] A novel by Rousseau, published in 1761.
[4] tidbit

horizon that shuts it from our sight also blots it from our memory like a dream. In traveling through a wild, barren country, I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. "Beyond Hyde Park," says Sir Fopling Flutter, "all is a desert." All that part of the map that we do not see before us is blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nutshell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, lands to seas, making an image voluminous and vast;—the mind can form no larger idea of space than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true signification of that immense mass of territory and population, known by the name of China to us? An inch of pasteboard on a wooden globe, of no more account than a China orange! Things near us are seen of the size of life: things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our own being only piecemeal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived, and with which we have intimate associations, every one must have found that the feeling grows more vivid the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression: we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names, that we had not thought of for years; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten!—To return to the question I have quitted above.

I have no objection to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge [1] will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to: in taking a solitary ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. "The mind is its own place"; nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honors indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat*—showed them that seat of the Muses at a distance,

With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn'd——[2]

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and cottages—was at home in the Bodleian; [3] and at Blenheim [4] quite superseded the powdered Cicerone that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures. As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and

[1] Huge stones in Salisbury Plain, in southern England.
[2] *Paradise Lost*, III, 550.
[3] A library at Oxford.
[4] The estate of the Marlborough family near Oxford.

notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen: there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any single contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species by oneself, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support.—Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the mariners' hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbor, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over "the vine-covered hills and gay regions of France," erect and satisfied; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones: I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open to me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory, freedom, all are fled: nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people!—There is undoubtedly a sensation in traveling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else: but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream or another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must "jump" all our present comforts and connections. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr. Johnson remarked how little foreign travel added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful, and, in one sense, instructive; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, downright existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings,

> Out of my country and myself I go.

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them: but we can be said only to fulfill our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in traveling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home!

LEIGH HUNT (1784–1859)

GETTING UP ON COLD MORNINGS

An Italian author—Giulio Cordara, a Jesuit—has written a poem upon insects, which he begins by insisting that those troublesome and abominable little animals were created for our annoyance, and that they were certainly not inhabitants of Paradise. We of the north may dispute this piece of theology; but on the other hand, it is as clear as the snow on the

house-tops, that Adam was not under the necessity of shaving; and that when Eve walked out of her delicious bower, she did not step upon ice three inches thick.

Some people say it is a very easy thing to get up of a cold morning. You have only, they tell you, to take the resolution; and the thing is done. This may be very true; just as a boy at school has only to take a flogging, and the thing is over. But we have not at all made up our minds upon it; and we find it a very pleasant exercise to discuss the matter, candidly, before we get up. This, at least, is not idling, though it may be lying. It affords an excellent answer to those who ask how lying in bed can be indulged in by a reasoning being,—a rational creature. How? Why, with the argument calmly at work in one's head, and the clothes over one's shoulder. Oh—it is a fine way of spending a sensible, impartial half-hour.

If these people would be more charitable, they would get on with their argument better. But they are apt to reason so ill, and to assert so dogmatically, that one could wish to have them stand round one's bed of a bitter morning, and *lie* before their faces. They ought to hear both sides of the bed, the inside and out. If they cannot entertain themselves with their own thoughts for half-an-hour or so, it is not the fault of those who can.

Candid inquiries into one's decumbency, besides the greater or less privileges to be allowed a man in proportion to his ability of keeping early hours, the work given his faculties, etc., will at least concede their due merits to such representations as the following. In the first place, says the injured but calm appealer, I have been warm all night, and find my system in a state perfectly suitable to a warm-blooded animal. To get out of this state into the cold, besides the inharmonious and uncritical abruptness of the transition, is so unnatural to such a creature, that the poets, refining upon the tortures of the damned, make one of their greatest agonies consist in being suddenly transported from heat to cold,—from fire to ice. They are "haled" out of their "beds," says Milton, by "harpy-footed furies,"—fellows who come to call them. On my first movement towards the anticipation of getting up, I find that such parts of the sheets and bolster as are exposed to the air of the room are stone-cold. On opening my eyes, the first thing that meets them is my own breath rolling forth, as if in the open air, like smoke out of a chimney. Think of this symptom. Then I turn my eyes sideways and see the window all frozen over. Think of that. Then the servant comes in. "It is very cold this morning, is it not?"—"Very cold, Sir."—"Very cold indeed, isn't it?"—"Very cold indeed, Sir."—"More than usually so, isn't it, even for this weather?" (Here the servant's wit and good-nature are put to a considerable test, and the inquirer lies on thorns for the answer.) "Why, Sir - - - - I think it *is*." (Good creature! There is not a better or more truth-telling servant going.) "I must rise, however—get me some warm water."—Here comes a fine interval between the departure of the servant and the arrival of the hot water; during which, of course, it is of "no use" to get up. The hot water comes. "Is it quite hot?"—"Yes, Sir."—"Perhaps too hot for shaving: I must wait a little?"—"No Sir; it will just do." (There is an over-nice propriety sometimes, an officious zeal of virtue, a little troublesome.) "Oh—the shirt—you must air my clean shirt;—linen gets very damp this weather."—"Yes, Sir." Here another delicious five minutes. A knock at the door. "Oh, the shirt—very well. My stockings—I think the stockings had

better be aired too."—"Very well, Sir."—Here another interval. At length everything is ready, except myself. I now, continues our incumbent (a happy word, by-the-bye, for a country vicar)—I now cannot help thinking a good deal—who can?—upon the unnecessary and villainous custom of shaving: it is a thing so unmanly (here I nestle closer)—so effeminate (here I recoil from an unlucky step into the colder part of the bed.)—No wonder that the Queen of France took part with the rebels against that degenerate King, her husband, who first affronted her smooth visage with a face like her own. The Emperor Julian never showed the luxuriancy of his genius to better advantage than in reviving the flowing beard. Look at Cardinal Bembo's picture—at Michael Angelo's—at Titian's—at Shakespeare's—at Fletcher's—at Spenser's—at Chaucer's—at Alfred's—at Plato's—I could name a great man for every tick of my watch.—Look at the Turks, a grave and otiose people.—Think of Haroun Al Raschid and Bed-ridden Hassan.—Think of Wortley Montague, the worthy son of his mother, above the prejudice of his time.—Look at the Persian gentlemen, whom one is ashamed of meeting about the suburbs, their dress and appearance are so much finer than our own.—Lastly, think of the razor itself—how totally opposed to every sensation of bed—how cold, how edgy, how hard! how utterly different from anything like the warm and circling amplitude, which

> "Sweetly recommends itself
> Unto our gentle senses."

Add to this, benumbed fingers, which may help you to cut yourself, a quivering body, a frozen towel, and a ewer full of ice; and he that says there is nothing to oppose in all this, only shows that he has no merit in opposing it.

Thomson the poet, who exclaims in his "Seasons"—

> "Falsely luxurious! Will not man awake?"

used to lie in bed till noon, because he said he had no motive in getting up. He could imagine the good of rising; but then he could also imagine the good of lying still; and his exclamation, it must be allowed, was made upon summer-time, not winter. We must proportion the argument to the individual character. A money-getter may be drawn out of his bed by three or four pence; but this will not suffice for a student. A proud man may say, "What shall I think of myself, if I don't get up?" but the more humble one will be content to waive this prodigious notion of himself, out of respect to his kindly bed. The mechanical man shall get up without any ado at all; and so shall the barometer. An ingenious lier in bed will find hard matter of discussion even on the score of health and longevity. He will ask us for our proofs and precedents of the ill effects of lying later in cold weather; and sophisticate much on the advantages of an even temperature of body; of the natural propensity (pretty universal) to have one's way; and of the animals that roll themselves up and sleep all the winter. As to longevity, he will ask whether the longest is of necessity the best; and whether Holborn is the handsomest street in London.

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811–1863)

ON BEING FOUND OUT

At the close (let us say) of Queen Anne's reign, when I was a boy at a private and preparatory school for young gentlemen, I remember the wiseacre of a master ordering us all, one night, to

march into a little garden at the back of the house, and thence to proceed one by one into a tool- or hen-house (I was but a tender little thing just put into short clothes, and can't exactly say whether the house was for tools or hens), and in that house to put our hands into a sack which stood on a bench, a candle burning beside it. I put my hand into the sack. My hand came out quite black. I went and joined the other boys in the schoolroom; and all their hands were black too.

By reason of my tender age (and there are some critics who, I hope, will be satisfied by my acknowledging that I am a hundred and fifty-six next birthday) I could not understand what was the meaning of this night excursion—this candle, this tool-house, this bag of soot. I think we little boys were taken out of our sleep to be brought to the ordeal. We came, then, and showed our little hands to the master; washed them or not—most probably, I should say, not—and so went bewildered back to bed.

Something had been stolen in the school that day; and Mr. Wiseacre having read in a book of an ingenious method of finding out a thief by making him put his hand into a sack (which, if guilty, the rogue would shirk from doing), all we boys were subjected to the trial. Goodness knows what the lost object was, or who stole it. We all had black hands to show to the master. And the thief, whoever he was, was not Found Out that time.

I wonder if the rascal is alive—an elderly scoundrel he must be by this time; and a hoary old hypocrite, to whom an old schoolfellow presents his kindest regard—parenthetically remarking what a dreadful place that private school was; cold, chilblains, bad dinners, not enough victuals, and caning awful!—Are you alive still, I say, you nameless villain, who escaped discovery on that day of crime? I hope you have escaped often since, old sinner. Ah, what a lucky thing it is, for you and me, my man, that we are *not* found out in all our peccadilloes; and that our backs can slip away from the master and the cane!

Just consider what life would be, if every rogue was found out, and flogged *coram populo!*[1] What a butchery, what an indecency, what an endless swishing of the rod! Don't cry out about my misanthropy. My good friend Mealymouth, I will trouble you to tell me, do you go to church? When there, do you say, or do you not, that you are a miserable sinner? and saying so, do you believe or disbelieve it? If you are a M.S., don't you deserve correction, and aren't you grateful if you are to be let off? I say again, what a blessed thing it is that we are not all found out!

Just picture to yourself everybody who does wrong being found out, and punished accordingly. Fancy all the boys in all the school being whipped; and then the assistants, and then the head master (Dr. Badford let us call him). Fancy the provost-marshal being tied up, having previously superintended the correction of the whole army. After the young gentlemen have had their turn for the faulty exercises, fancy Doctor Lincolnsinn being taken up for certain faults in *his* Essay and Review. After the clergyman has cried his peccavi,[2] suppose we hoist up a bishop, and give him a couple of dozen! (I see my Lord Bishop of Double-Gloucester sitting in a very uneasy posture on his right reverend bench.) After we have cast off the bishop, what are we to say to the Minister who appointed him? My Lord Cinqwarden, it is painful to have to use personal correction to a boy of your age;

[1] publicly [2] admitted his guilt

but really . . . *Siste tandem, carnifex!* [1] The butchery is too horrible. The hand drops powerless, appalled at the quantity of birch which it must cut and brandish. I am glad we are not all found out, I say again; and protest, my dear brethren, against our having our deserts.

To fancy all men found out and punished is bad enough; but imagine all women found out in the distinguished social circle in which you and I have the honor to move. Is it not a mercy that a many of these fair criminals remain unpunished and undiscovered? There is Mrs. Longbow, who is forever practising, and who shoots poisoned arrows, too; when you meet her you don't call her liar, and charge her with the wickedness she has done, and is doing. There is Mrs. Painter, who passes for a most respectable woman, and a model in society. There is no use in saying what you really know regarding her and her goings on. There is Diana Hunter—what a little haughty prude it is; and yet *we* know stories about her which are not altogether edifying. I say it is best, for the sake of the good, that the bad should not all be found out. You don't want your children to know the history of that lady in the next box, who is so handsome, and whom they admire so. Ah me, what would life be if we were all found out, and punished for all our faults? Jack Ketch would be in permanence; and then who would hang Jack Ketch?

They talk of murderers being pretty certainly found out. Psha! I have heard an authority awfully competent vow and declare that scores and hundreds of murders are committed, and nobody is the wiser. That terrible man mentioned one or two ways of committing murder, which he maintained were quite common, and were scarcely ever found out. A man, for instance, comes home to his wife, and—but I pause—I know that this Magazine has a very large circulation. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands—why not say a million of people at once?—well, say a million, read it. And amongst these countless readers, I might be teaching some monster how to make away with his wife without being found out, some fiend of a woman how to destroy her husband. I will *not* then tell this easy and simple way of murder, as communicated to me by a most respectable party in the confidence of private intercourse. Suppose some gentle reader were to try this most simple and easy receipt—it seems to be almost infallible—and come to grief in consequence, and be found out and hanged? Should I ever pardon myself for having been the means of doing injury to a single one of our esteemed subscribers? The prescription whereof I speak—that is to say whereof I *don't* speak—shall be buried in this bosom. No, I am a humane man. I am not one of your Bluebeards to go and say to my wife, "My dear! I am going away for a few days to Brighton. Here are all the keys of the house. You may open every door and closet, except the one at the end of the oak-room opposite the fireplace, with the little bronze Shakespeare on the mantelpiece (or what not)." I don't say this to a woman—unless, to be sure, I want to get rid of her—because, after such a caution, I know she'll peep into the closet. I say nothing about the closet at all. I keep the key in my pocket, and a being whom I love, but who, as I know, has many weaknesses, out of harm's way. You toss up your head, dear angel, drub on the ground with your lovely little feet, on the table with your sweet rosy fingers, and cry, "Oh, sneerer! You don't know the depth of a woman's feeling, the lofty scorn of all deceit, the entire absence of mean curiosity in the sex, or never, never would

[1] Stop, then, butcher.

you libel us so!" Ah, Delia! dear, dear Delia! It is because I fancy I *do* know something about you (not all, mind—no, no; no man knows that)—Ah, my bride, my ringdove, my rose, my poppet—choose, in fact, whatever name you like—bulbul[1] of my grove, fountain of my desert, sunshine of my darkling life, and joy of my dungeoned existence, it is because I *do* know a little about you that I conclude to say nothing of that private closet, and keep my key in my pocket. You take away that closet-key then, and the house-key. You lock Delia in. You keep her out of harm's way and gadding, and so she never *can* be found out.

And yet by little strange accidents and coincidences how we are being found out every day. You remember that old story of the Abbé Kakatoes, who told the company at supper one night how the first confession he ever received was—from a murderer let us say. Presently enters to supper the Marquis de Croquemitaine. "Palsambleu, abbé!" says the brilliant marquis, taking a pinch of snuff, "are you here? Gentlemen and ladies! I was the abbé's first penitent, and I made him a confession, which I promise you astonished him."

To be sure how queerly things are found out! Here is an instance. Only the other day I was writing in these *Roundabout Papers*[2] about a certain man, whom I facetiously called Baggs, and who had abused me to my friends, who of course told me. Shortly after that paper was published another friend—Sacks let us call him—scowls fiercely at me as I am sitting in perfect good-humor at the club, and passes on without speaking. A cut. A quarrel. Sacks thinks it is about him that I was writing: whereas, upon my honor and conscience, I never had him once in my mind, and was pointing my moral from quite another man. But don't you see, by this wrath of the guilty-conscienced Sacks, that he had been abusing me too? He has owned himself guilty, never having been accused. He has winced when nobody thought of hitting him. I did but put the cap out, and madly butting and chafing, behold my friend rushes out to put his head into it! Never mind, Sacks, you are found out; but I bear you no malice, my man.

And yet to be found out, I know from my own experience, must be painful and odious, and cruelly mortifying to the inward vanity. Suppose I am a poltroon, let us say. With fierce mustache, loud talk, plentiful oaths, and an immense stick, I keep up nevertheless a character for courage. I swear fearfully at cabmen and women; brandish my bludgeon, and perhaps knock down a little man or two with it: brag of the images which I break at the shooting-gallery, and pass amongst my friends for a whiskery fire-eater, afraid of neither man nor dragon. Ah me! Suppose some brisk little chap steps up and gives me a caning in St. James's Street, with all the heads of my friends looking out of all the club windows. My reputation is gone. I frighten no man more. My nose is pulled by whippersnappers, who jump up on a chair to reach it. I am found out. And in the days of my triumphs, when people were yet afraid of me, and were taken in by my swagger, I always knew that I was a lily-liver, and expected that I should be found out some day.

The certainty of being found out must haunt and depress many a bold braggadocio spirit. Let us say it is a clergyman, who can pump copious floods of tears out of his own eyes and those of his audience. He thinks to himself, "I am but a poor swindling, chattering rogue. My

[1] nightingale

[2] A series of essays by Thackeray.

bills are unpaid. I have jilted several women whom I have promised to marry. I don't know whether I believe what I preach, and I know I have stolen the very sermon over which I have been snivelling. Have they found me out?" says he, as his head drops down on the cushion.

Then your writer, poet, historian, novelist, or what not? The *Beacon* says that "Jones's work is one of the first order." The *Lamp* declares that "Jones's tragedy surpasses every work since the days of Him of Avon." The *Comet* asserts that "J's Life of Goody Two-shoes is κτῆμα ἐς ἀεὶ, a noble and enduring monument to the fame of that admirable Englishwoman," and so forth. But then Jones knows that he has lent the critic of the *Beacon* five pounds; that his publisher has a half-share in the *Lamp;* and that the *Comet* comes repeatedly to dine with him. It is all very well. Jones is immortal until he is found out; and then down comes the extinguisher and the immortal is dead and buried. The idea (*dies iræ!*) of discovery must haunt many a man, and make him uneasy, as the trumpets are puffing in his triumph. Brown, who has a higher place than he deserves, cowers before Smith, who has found him out. What is a chorus of critics shouting "Bravo"?—a public clapping hands and flinging garlands? Brown knows that Smith has found him out. Puff, trumpets! Wave, banners! Huzza, boys, for the immortal Brown! "This is all very well," B. thinks (bowing the while, smiling, laying his hand to his heart); "but there stands Smith at the window: he has measured me; and some day the others will find me out too." It is a very curious sensation to sit by a man who has found you out, and who, as you know, has found you out; or, *vice versa,* to sit with a man whom *you* have found out. His talent? Bah! His virtue? We know a little story or two about his virtue, and he knows we know it. We are thinking over friend Robinson's antecedents, as we grin, bow, and talk; and we are both humbugs together. Robinson a good fellow, is he? You know how he behaved to Hicks? A good-natured man, is he? Pray do you remember that little story of Mrs. Robinson's black eye? How men have to work, to talk, to smile, to go to bed, and try and sleep, with this dread of being found out on their consciences! Bardolph, who has robbed a church, and Nym,[1] who has taken a purse, go to their usual haunts, and smoke their pipes with their companions. Mr. Detective Bullseye appears, and says, "Oh, Bardolph, I want you about that pyx business!" Mr. Bardolph knocks the ashes out of his pipe, puts out his hands to the little steel cuffs, and walks away quite meekly. He is found out. He must go. "Good-bye, Doll Tearsheet! Good-bye, Mrs. Quickly, ma'am!" The other gentlemen and ladies *de la société* look on and exchange mute adieux with the departing friends. And an assured time will come when the other gentlemen and ladies will be found out too.

What a wonderful and beautiful provision of nature it has been that, for the most part, our womankind are not endowed with the faculty of finding us out! *They* don't doubt, and probe, and weigh, and take your measure. Lay down this paper, my benevolent friend and reader, go into your drawing-room now, and utter a joke ever so old, and I wager sixpence the ladies there will all begin to laugh. Go to Brown's house, and tell Mrs. Brown and the young ladies what you think of him, and see what a welcome you will get! In like manner, let him come to your house, and tell *your* good lady his

[1] See Shakespeare's *1 and 2 Henry IV* and *Henry V.*

candid opinion of you, and fancy how she will receive him! Would you have your wife and children know you exactly for what you are, and esteem you precisely at your worth? If so, my friend, you will live in a dreary house, and you will have but a chilly fireside. Do you suppose the people round it don't see your homely face as under a glamor, and, as it were, with a halo of love round it? You don't fancy you *are,* as you seem to them? No such thing, my man. Put away that monstrous conceit, and be thankful that *they* have not found you out.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850–1894)

CRABBED AGE AND YOUTH

"You know my mother now and then argues very notably; always very warmly at least. I happen often to differ from her; and we both think so well of our own arguments, that we very seldom are so happy as to convince one another. A pretty common case, I believe, in all *vehement* debatings. She says, I am *too witty;* Anglice, *too pert;* I, that she is *too wise;* that is to say, being likewise put into English, *not so young as she has been.*"—Miss Howe to Miss Harlowe, *Clarissa,* vol. II, Letter XIII.[1]

There is a strong feeling in favor of cowardly and prudential proverbs. The sentiments of a man while he is full of ardor and hope are to be received, it is supposed, with some qualification. But when the same person has ignominiously failed and begins to eat up his words, he should be listened to like an oracle. Most of our pocket wisdom is conceived for the use of mediocre people, to discourage them from ambitious attempts and generally console them in their mediocrity. And since mediocre people constitute the bulk of humanity, this is no doubt very properly so. But it does not follow that the one sort of proposition is any less true than the other, or that Icarus[2] is not to be more praised, and perhaps more envied, than Mr. Samuel Budgett, the Successful Merchant. The one is dead, to be sure, while the other is still in his counting-house counting out his money; and doubtless this is a consideration. But we have, on the other hand, some bold and magnanimous sayings common to high races and natures, which set forth the advantage of the losing side, and proclaim it better to be a dead lion than a living dog. It is difficult to fancy how the mediocrities reconcile such sayings with their proverbs. According to the latter, every lad who goes to sea is an egregious ass; never to forget your umbrella through a long life would seem a higher and wiser flight of achievement than to go smiling to the stake; and so long as you are a bit of a coward and inflexible in money matters, you fulfil the whole duty of man.

It is a still more difficult consideration for our average men, that while all their teachers, from Solomon down to Benjamin Franklin and the ungodly Binney, have inculcated the same ideal of manners, caution, and respectability, those characters in history who have most notoriously flown in the face of such precepts are spoken of in hyperbolical terms of praise, and honored with public monuments in the streets of our commercial centers. This is very bewildering to the moral sense. You have Joan of Arc, who left a humble but honest and reputable livelihood under the eyes of her parents, to go a-colonelling, in the company of rowdy soldiers, against the enemies of France; surely a melancholy example for one's daughters! And then you have Columbus, who may have pioneered

[1] From *Clarissa,* a novel by Samuel Richardson (1689-1761).

[2] A boy whose father, Daedalus, fashioned him wings and attached them with wax. When he flew too near the sun the wax melted.

America, but, when all is said, was a most imprudent navigator. His life is not the kind of thing one would like to put into the hands of young people; rather, one would do one's utmost to keep it from their knowledge, as a red flag of adventure and disintegrating influence in life. The time would fail me if I were to recite all the big names in history whose exploits are perfectly irrational and even shocking to the business mind. The incongruity is speaking; and I imagine it must engender among the mediocrities a very peculiar attitude towards the nobler and showier sides of national life. They will read of the Charge of Balaclava [1] in much the same spirit as they assist at a performance of the *Lyons Mail*. Persons of substance take in the *Times* and sit composedly in pit or boxes according to the degree of their prosperity in business. As for the generals who go galloping up and down among bomb-shells in absurd cocked hats—as for the actors who raddle [2] their faces and demean themselves for hire upon the stage—they must belong, thank God! to a different order of beings, whom we watch as we watch the clouds careering in the windy, bottomless inane, or read about like characters in ancient and rather fabulous annals. Our offspring would no more think of copying their behavior, let us hope, than of doffing their clothes and painting themselves blue in consequence of certain admissions in the first chapter of their school history of England.

Discredited as they are in practice, the cowardly proverbs hold their own in theory; and it is another instance of the same spirit, that the opinions of old men about life have been accepted as final. All sorts of allowances are made for the illusions of youth; and none, or almost none, for the disenchantments of age. It is held to be a good taunt, and somehow or other to clinch the question logically, when an old gentleman waggles his head and says: "Ah, so I thought when I was your age." It is not thought an answer at all, if the young man retorts: "My venerable sir, so I shall most probably think when I am yours." And yet the one is as good as the other: pass for pass, tit for tat, a Roland for an Oliver.

"Opinion in good men," says Milton, "is but knowledge in the making." All opinions, properly so called, are stages on the road to truth. It does not follow that a man will travel any further; but if he has really considered the world and drawn a conclusion, he has traveled as far. This does not apply to formulæ got by rote, which are stages on the road to nowhere but second childhood and the grave. To have a catchword in your mouth is not the same thing as to hold an opinion; still less is it the same thing as to have made one for yourself. There are too many of these catchwords in the world for people to rap out upon you like an oath and by way of an argument. They have a currency as intellectual counters; and many respectable persons pay their way with nothing else. They seem to stand for vague bodies of theory in the background. The imputed argument of folios full of knockdown arguments is supposed to reside in them, just as some of the majesty of the British Empire dwells in the constable's truncheon.[3] They are used in pure superstition, as old clodhoppers spoil Latin by way of an exorcism. And yet they are vastly serviceable for checking unprofitable discussion and stopping the mouths of babes and sucklings. And when a young man comes to a certain stage of intellectual growth, the examination of these counters forms a gymnastic at once amusing and fortifying to the mind.

[1] The charge of the Light Brigade, celebrated by Tennyson, which took place in the Crimæan War.
[2] color with rouge
[3] club

Because I have reached Paris, I am not ashamed of having passed through Newhaven and Dieppe. They were very good places to pass through, and I am none the less at my destination. All my old opinions were only stages on the way to the one I now hold, as itself is only a stage on the way to something else. I am no more abashed at having been a red-hot Socialist with a panacea of my own than at having been a sucking infant. Doubtless the world is quite right in a million ways; but you have to be kicked about a little to convince you of the fact. And in the meanwhile you must do something, be something, believe something. It is not possible to keep the mind in a state of accurate balance and blank; and even if you could do so, instead of coming ultimately to the right conclusion, you would be very apt to remain in a state of balance and blank to perpetuity. Even in quite intermediate stages, a dash of enthusiasm is not a thing to be ashamed of in the restrospect: if St. Paul had not been a very zealous Pharisee, he would have been a colder Christian. For my part, I look back to the time when I was a Socialist with something like regret. I have convinced myself (for the moment) that we had better leave these great changes to what we call great blind forces; their blindness being so much more perspicacious than the little, peering, partial eyesight of men. I seem to see that my own scheme would not answer; and all the other schemes I ever heard propounded would depress some elements of goodness just as much as they encouraged others. Now I know that in thus turning Conservative with years, I am going through the normal cycle of change and traveling in the common orbit of men's opinions. I submit to this, as I would submit to gout or grey hair, as a concomitant of growing age or else of failing animal heat; but I do not acknowledge that it is necessarily a change for the better—I daresay it is deplorably for the worse. I have no choice in the business, and can no more resist this tendency of my mind than I could prevent my body from beginning to totter and decay. If I am spared (as the phrase runs) I shall doubtless outlive some troublesome desires; but I am in no hurry about that; nor, when the times comes, shall I plume myself on the immunity. Just in the same way, I do not greatly pride myself on having outlived my belief in the fairy tales of Socialism. Old people have faults of their own; they tend to become cowardly, niggardly, and suspicious. Whether from the growth of experience or the decline of animal heat, I see that age leads to these and certain other faults; and it follows, of course, that while in one sense I hope I am journeying towards the truth, in another I am indubitably posting towards these forms and sources of error.

As we go catching and catching at this or that corner of knowledge, now getting a foresight of generous possibilities, now chilled with a glimpse of prudence, we may compare the headlong course of our years to a swift torrent in which a man is carried away; now he is dashed against a boulder, now he grapples for a moment to a trailing spray; at the end, he is hurled out and overwhelmed in a dark and bottomless ocean. We have no more than glimpses and touches; we are torn away from our theories; we are spun round and round and shown this or the other view of life, until only fools and knaves can hold to their opinions. We take a sight at a condition in life, and say we have studied it; our most elaborate view is no more than an impression. If we had breathing space, we should take the occasion to modify and adjust; but at this breakneck hurry, we are no sooner boys than we are adult, no sooner in love than married or jilted, no sooner one age

than we begin to be another, and no sooner in the fulness of our manhood than we begin to decline towards the grave. It is in vain to seek for consistency or expect clear and stable views in a medium so perturbed and fleeting. This is no cabinet science, in which things are tested to a scruple; we theorize with a pistol to our head; we are confronted with a new set of conditions on which we have not only to pass judgment, but to take action, before the hour is at an end. And we cannot even regard ourselves as a constant; in this flux of things, our identity itself seems in a perpetual variation; and not infrequently we find our own disguise the strangest in the masquerade. In the course of time, we grow to love things we hated and hate things we loved. Milton is not so dull as he once was, nor perhaps Ainsworth[1] so amusing. It is decidedly harder to climb trees, and not nearly so hard to sit still. There is no use pretending; even the thrice royal game of hide and seek has somehow lost in zest. All our attributes are modified or changed; and it will be a poor account of us if our views do not modify and change in a proportion. To hold the same views at forty as we held at twenty is to have been stupefied for a score of years, and take rank, not as a prophet, but as an unteachable brat, well birched and none the wiser. It is as if a ship captain should sail to India from the Port of London; and having brought a chart of the Thames on deck at his first setting out, should obstinately use no other for the whole voyage.

And mark you, it would be no less foolish to begin at Gravesend with a chart of the Red Sea. *Si Jeunesse savait, si Vieillesse pouvait*,[2] is a very pretty sentiment, but not necessarily right. In five cases out of ten, it is not so much that the young people do not know as that they do not choose. There is something irreverent in the speculation, but perhaps the want of power has more to do with the wise resolutions of age than we are always willing to admit. It would be an instructive experiment to make an old man young again and leave him all his *savoir*. I scarcely think he would put his money in the Savings Bank after all; I doubt if he would be such an admirable son as we are led to expect; and as for his conduct in love, I firmly believe he would out-Herod Herod and put the whole of his new compeers to the blush. Prudence is a wooden Juggernaut, before whom Benjamin Franklin walks with the portly air of a high priest, and after whom dances many a successful merchant in the character of Atys. But it is not a deity to cultivate in youth. If a man lives to any considerable age, it cannot be denied that he laments his imprudences, but I notice he often laments his youth a deal more bitterly and with a more genuine intonation.

It is customary to say that age should be considered, because it comes last. It seems just as much to the point, that youth comes first. And the scale fairly kicks the beam, if you go on to add that age, in a majority of cases, never comes at all. Disease and accident make short work of even the most prosperous persons; death costs nothing, and the expense of a head-stone is an inconsiderable trifle to the happy heir. To be suddenly snuffed out in the middle of ambitious schemes, is tragical enough at best; but when a man has been grudging himself his own life in the meanwhile, and saving up everything for the festival that was never to be, it becomes that hysterically moving sort of tragedy which lies on the confines of farce. The victim is dead —and he has cunningly overreached himself: a combination of calamities none

[1] A popular novelist of the nineteenth century.

[2] If youth could but know; if age could but do.

the less absurd for being grim. To husband a favorite claret until the batch turns sour, is not at all an artful stroke of policy; and how much more with a whole cellar—a whole bodily existence! People may lay down their lives with cheerfulness in the sure expectation of a blessed immortality; but that is a different affair from giving up youth with all its admirable pleasures, in the hope of a better quality of gruel in a more than problematical, nay, more than improbable, old age. We should not compliment a hungry man, who would refuse a whole dinner and reserve all his appetite for the dessert before he knew whether there was to be any dessert or not. If there be such a thing as imprudence in the world, we surely have it here. We sail in leaky bottoms and on great and perilous waters; and to take a cue from the dolorous old naval ballad, we have heard the mermaidens singing, and know that we shall never see dry land any more. Old and young, we are all on our last cruise. If there is a fill of tobacco among the crew, for God's sake pass it round, and let us have a pipe before we go!

Indeed, by the report of our elders, this nervous preparation for old age is only trouble thrown away. We fall on guard, and after all it is a friend who comes to meet us. After the sun is down and the west faded, the heavens begin to fill with shining stars. So, as we grow old, a sort of equable jog-trot of feeling is substituted for the violent ups and downs of passion and disgust; the same influence that restrains our hopes, quiets our apprehensions; if the pleasures are less intense, the troubles are milder and more tolerable; and in a word, this period for which we are asked to hoard up everything as for a time of famine, is, in its own right, the richest, easiest, and happiest of life. Nay, by managing its own work and following its own happy inspiration, youth is doing the best it can to endow the leisure of age. A full, busy youth is your only prelude to a self-contained and independent age; and the muff inevitably develops into the bore. There are not many Dr. Johnsons, to set forth upon their first romantic voyage at sixty-four. If we wish to scale Mont Blanc or visit a thieves' kitchen in the East End, to go down in a diving dress or up in a balloon, we must be about it while we are still young. It will not do to delay until we are clogged with prudence and limping with rheumatism, and people begin to ask us: "What does Gravity out of bed?" Youth is the time to go flashing from one end of the world to the other both in mind and body; to try the manners of different nations; to hear the chimes at midnight; to see sunrise in town and country; to be converted at a revival; to circumnavigate the metaphysics, write halting verses, run a mile to see a fire, and wait all day long in the theater to applaud *Hernani*.[1] There is some meaning in the old theory about wild oats; and a man who has not had his green-sickness and got done with it for good, is as little to be depended on as an unvaccinated infant. "It is extraordinary," says Lord Beaconsfield, one of the brightest and best preserved of youths up to the date of his last novel, "it is extraordinary how hourly and how violently change the feelings of an inexperienced young man." And this mobility is a special talent entrusted to his care; a sort of indestructible virginity; a magic armor, with which he can pass unhurt through great dangers and come unbedaubed out of the miriest passages. Let him voyage, speculate, see all that he can, do all that he may; his soul has as many lives as a cat; he will live in all weathers,

[1] A popular romantic drama by Victor Hugo (1802-1885).

and never be a halfpenny the worse. Those who go to the devil in youth, with anything like a fair chance, were probably little worth saving from the first; they must have been feeble fellows—creatures made of putty and packthread, without steel or fire, anger or true joyfulness, in their composition; we may sympathize with their parents, but there is not much cause to go into mourning for themselves; for to be quite honest, the weak brother is the worst of mankind.

When the old man waggles his head and says, "Ah, so I thought when I was your age," he has proved the youth's case. Doubtless, whether from growth of experience or decline of animal heat, he thinks so no longer; but he thought so while he was young; and all men have thought so while they were young, since there was dew in the morning or hawthorn in May; and here is another young man adding his vote to those of previous generations and riveting another link to the chain of testimony. It is as natural and as right for a young man to be imprudent and exaggerated, to live in swoops and circles, and beat about his cage like any other wild thing newly captured, as it is for old men to turn gray, or mothers to love their offspring, or heroes to die for something worthier than their lives.

By way of an apologue for the aged, when they feel more than usually tempted to offer their advice, let me recommend the following little tale. A child who had been remarkably fond of toys (and in particular of lead soldiers) found himself growing to the level of acknowledged boyhood without any abatement of this childish taste. He was thirteen; already he had been taunted for dallying overlong about the playbox; he had to blush if he was found among his lead soldiers; the shades of the prison-house were closing about him with a vengeance. There is nothing more difficult than to put the thoughts of children into the language of their elders; but this is the effect of his meditations at this juncture: "Plainly," he said, "I must give up my playthings, in the meanwhile, since I am not in a position to secure myself against idle jeers. At the same time, I am sure that playthings are the very pick of life; all people give them up out of the same pusillanimous respect for those who are a little older; and if they do not return to them as soon as they can, it is only because they grow stupid and forget. I shall be wiser; I shall conform for a while to the ways of their foolish world; but so soon as I have made enough money, I shall retire and shut myself up among my playthings until the day I die." Nay, as he was passing in the train along the Esterel mountains between Cannes and Fréjus, he remarked a pretty house in an orange garden at the angle of a bay, and decided that this should be his Happy Valley. Astrea Redux; childhood was to come again! The idea has an air of simple nobility to me, not unworthy of Cincinnatus. And yet, as the reader has probably anticipated, it is never likely to be carried into effect. There was a worm in the bud, a fatal error in the premises. Childhood must pass away, and then youth, as surely as age approaches. The true wisdom is to be always seasonable, and to change with good grace in changing circumstances. To love playthings well as a child, to lead an adventurous and honorable youth, and to settle when the time arrives, into a green and smiling age, is to be a good artist in life and deserve well of yourself and your neighbor.

You need repent none of your youthful vagaries. They may have been over the score on one side, just as those of age are probably over the score on the other.

But they had a point; they not only befitted your age and expressed its attitude and passions, but they had a relation to what was outside of you, and implied criticisms on the existing state of things, which you need not allow to have been undeserved, because you now see that they were partial. All error, not merely verbal, is a strong way of stating that the current truth is incomplete. The follies of youth have a basis in sound reason, just as much as the embarrassing questions put by babes and sucklings. Their most antisocial acts indicate the defects of our society. When the torrent sweeps the man against a boulder, you must expect him to scream, and you need not be surprised if the scream is sometimes a theory. Shelley, chafing at the Church of England, discovered the cure of all evils in universal atheism. Generous lads irritated at the injustices of society, see nothing for it but the abolishment of everything and Kingdom Come of anarchy. Shelley was a young fool; so are these cocksparrow revolutionaries. But it is better to be a fool than to be dead. It is better to emit a scream in the shape of a theory than to be entirely insensible to the jars and incongruities of life and take everything as it comes in a forlorn stupidity. Some people swallow the universe like a pill; they travel on through the world, like smiling images pushed from behind. For God's sake give me the young man who has brains enough to make a fool of himself! As for the others, the irony of facts shall take it out of their hands, and make fools of them in downright earnest, ere the farce be over. There shall be such a mopping and a mowing at the last day, and such blushing and confusion of countenance for all those who have been wise in their own esteem, and have not learnt the rough lessons that youth hands on to age. If we are indeed here to perfect and complete our own natures, and grow larger, stronger, and more sympathetic against some nobler career in the future, we had all best bestir ourselves to the utmost while we have the time. To equip a dull, respectable person with wings would be but to make a parody of an angel.

In short, if youth is not quite right in its opinions, there is a strong probability that age is not much more so. Undying hope is co-ruler of the human bosom with infallible credulity. A man finds he has been wrong at every preceding stage of his career, only to deduce the astonishing conclusion that he is at last entirely right. Mankind, after centuries of failure, are still upon the eve of a thoroughly constitutional millennium. Since we have explored the maze so long without result, it follows, for poor human reason, that we cannot have to explore much longer; close by must be the center, with a champagne luncheon and a piece of ornamental water. How if there were no center at all, but just one alley after another, and the whole world a labyrinth without end or issue?

I overheard the other day a scrap of conversation which I take the liberty to reproduce. "What I advance is true," said one. "But not the whole truth," answered the other. "Sir," returned the first (and it seemed to me there was a smack of Dr. Johnson in the speech), "Sir, there is no such thing as the whole truth!" Indeed there is nothing so evident in life as that there are two sides to a question. History is one long illustration. The forces of nature are engaged, day by day, in cudgelling it into our backward intelligences. We never pause for a moment's consideration, but we admit it as an axiom. An enthusiast sways humanity exactly by disregarding this great truth, and dinning it into our ears that this or that question has only

one possible solution; and your enthusiast is a fine florid fellow, dominates things for a while and shakes the world out of a doze; but when once he is gone, an army of quiet and uninfluential people set to work to remind us of the other side and demolish the generous imposture. While Calvin[1] is putting everybody exactly right in his *Institutes*, and hot-headed Knox[2] is thundering in the pulpit, Montaigne is already looking at the other side in his library in Perigord, and predicting that they will find as much to quarrel about in the Bible as they had found already in the Church. Age may have one side, but assuredly Youth has the other. There is nothing more certain than that both are right, except perhaps that both are wrong. Let them agree to differ; for who knows but what agreeing to differ may not be a form of agreement rather than a form of difference?

I suppose it is written that any one who sets up for a bit of a philosopher, must contradict himself to his very face. For here have I fairly talked myself into thinking that we have the whole thing before us at last; that there is no answer to the mystery, except that there are as many as you please; that there is no center to the maze because, like the famous sphere, its center is everywhere; and that agreeing to differ with every ceremony of politeness, is the only "one undisturbed song of pure concent" to which we are ever likely to lend our musical voices.

[1] A famous Swiss theologian.

[2] A Scotch theologian and reformer.

VICTORIAN LYRICS

THE poets who wrote after the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 were conscious of new influences that were making themselves felt in the social life of England. Most significant of these was the rise of the scientific spirit. Science brought inventions that revolutionized industry, but it went still further into the life of man by considering the relation of the individual to his environment and by questioning the very foundations upon which religious faith had been built. The age became more reflective and speculative and the poets grew more concerned with the significance of life. This was particularly true of Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning, the two greatest of the poetic spokesmen for this period, and of Matthew Arnold as well.

Tennyson was a conservative by training and valued highly the greatness of England's past. To him the poet was a seer, an interpreter of life who might wield great influence. He believed in traditional morality and although the skepticism of his day challenged him, he fought his way to a belief in God and in the necessity of faith in matters that are beyond human knowledge. Artistically his verse is in the line of tradition from Spenser and Keats, beautiful in detail, rich in diction, and melodious.

Browning's interest is always in the individual. To him the great poet was one who "chronicled the stages of all life." Himself a liberal, he went his individual way in poetry and developed a new form, the dramatic lyric. He lets some clearly imagined character reveal the secrets of his soul through the narration of some emotional or dramatic climax of his life. There is the same emotional intensity, the same unity of effect that is to be found in the lyric; the difference lies in the fact that the poet has followed the method of the dramatist in putting the emotion into the mouth of another. From these lyrics, however, one can get a realization of Browning's zest for life, his liberalism, his optimism, and his triumphant belief in immortality.

Matthew Arnold, keen student of life, never reached Tennyson's faith. To him the world was full of disillusionment; man must find compensation in self-mastery and in the development of character. Dignity and poise are evident in his manner of poetic expression.

There were some Victorian poets to whom the present was not alluring and for whom the realities lay only in the imagination of man. William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti were among them, artists who sought to create beauty for its own sake.

Algernon Charles Swinburne was a pure lyrist. He sang with enthusiasm of the elemental things in Nature and in man,—of Fate, of romantic passion, of the love

of children, and, most inspiringly of all, of freedom. It is the soul of the poet, not thought and reflection, that he gives us, poured forth in a melody that is individually his own.

George Meredith, poet and novelist, was a man of great intellectual and imaginative power. With flashes of insight he reveals what is below the surface, in poems that show a fine sense of form. *Modern Love* is a sonnet-like sequence largely autobiographical; each of the lyrics here given, however, is complete in itself.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
(1809–1892)

MARIANA

"Mariana in the moated grange"
—*Measure for Measure*

With blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all:
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Her tears fell with the dew at even;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried;
She could not look on the sweet heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
She drew the casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow:
The cock sung out an hour ere light:
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her: without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the moldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound
Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said;
She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,
Oh God, that I were dead!"

THE LOTOS-EATERS

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemèd always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And, like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West; thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;
A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG

I

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass;
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass:
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,—
We only toil, who are the first of things,—
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown;
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm:
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

III

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,—
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days
The flower ripens in its place,—
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,—
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life: ah, why
Should life all labor be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?

All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall, and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
Eating the lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,—
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold,—
Our sons inherit us, our looks are strange,
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes, overbold,
Have eat our substance; and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The gods are hard to reconcile;
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labor unto agèd breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars,
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet, while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly,
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long, bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill;
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twinèd vine;
To watch the emerald-color'd water falling
Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine—
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the pine.

VIII

The lotos blooms below the barren peak;
The lotos blows by every winding creek;
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone,
Round and round the spicy downs, the yellow lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,

Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live, and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys and the clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world;
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile: they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine, and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whisper'd, down in hell
Suffer endless anguish,—others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil,—the shore
Than labor in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar:
O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

BREAK, BREAK, BREAK

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

BUGLE SONG

From The Princess

The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story:
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar[1]
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying:
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

[1] bare rock

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

TEARS, IDLE TEARS

From The Princess

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

ASK ME NO MORE

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are seal'd;
I strove against the stream and all in vain;
Let the great river take me to the main.
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an aged wife, I mete[1] and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.

[1] measure out

I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades[1]
Vex'd the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honor'd of them all,—
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch where thro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me,—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'

[1] A group of stars formerly associated with wet weather.

We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

SONG

From The Brook

I come from haunts of coot [1] and hern,[2]
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling.

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me, as I travel
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

[1] A species of swimming and diving bird. [2] heron

ST. AGNES' EVE

Deep on the convent-roof the snows
Are sparkling to the moon:
My breath to heaven like vapor goes:
May my soul follow soon!
The shadows of the convent-towers
Slant down the snowy sward,
Still creeping with the creeping hours
That lead me to my Lord:

Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
  As are the frosty skies,
Or this first snowdrop of the year
  That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and dark,
  To yonder shining ground;
As this pale taper's earthly spark,
  To yonder argent round;
So shows my soul before the Lamb,
  My spirit before Thee;
So in mine earthly house I am,
  To that I hope to be.
Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
  Thro' all yon starlight keen,
Draw me, thy bride, a glittering star,
  In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
  The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
  And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up! the gates
  Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
  To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of Eternity,
  One sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
  The Bridegroom and his bride!

YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
  Within this region I subsist,
  Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
  That sober-suited Freedom chose,
  The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will;
A land of settled government,
  A land of just and old renown,
  Where Freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent.

Where faction seldom gathers head,
  But by degrees to fulness wrought,
  The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
  Opinion, and induce a time
  When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
  The name of Britain trebly great—
  Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
  Wild wind! I seek a warmer sky,
  And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques[1] of men,
  My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
  Because my heart is pure.
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
  The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and fly,
  The horse and rider reel:
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
  And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
  That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
  On whom their favors fall!

[1] helmets

For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall:
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and shrine:
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent[1] goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns;
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
I find a magic bark;
I leap on board; no helmsman steers:
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the holy Grail:
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And star-like mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,[2]
And, ringing, springs from brand and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
Such hope, I know not fear;
I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
That often meet me here.
I muse on joy that will not cease,
Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
Pure lilies of eternal peace,
Whose odors haunt my dreams;
And, stricken by an angel's hand,
This mortal armor that I wear,
This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
And thro' the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony
Swells up, and shakes and falls.
They move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
"O just and faithful knight of God!
Ride on! the prize is near."
So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
Until I find the holy Grail.

[1] cloudy moon [2] roofs

From IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life, in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
  Thou madest man, he knows not why,
  He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
  The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
  Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
  They have their day and cease to be:
  They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
  For knowledge is of things we see;
  And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
  But more of reverence in us dwell;
  That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
  We mock thee when we do not fear:
  But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me;
  What seemed my worth since I began;
  For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
  Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
  I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
  Confusions of a wasted youth;
  Forgive them where they fail in truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
  O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
  O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
  A web is wov'n across the sky;
  From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun;

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands,—
  With all the music in her tone,
  A hollow echo of my own,—
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
  Embrace her as my natural good;
  Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
  Calm as to suit a calmer grief;
  And only, thro' the faded leaf,
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
  And on these dews that drench the furze,
  And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
  That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
  And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
  These leaves that redden to the fall;
  And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out, and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
  That Nature lends such evil dreams?
  So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life;

That I, considering everywhere
  Her secret meaning in her deeds,
  And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod;
  And falling with my weight of cares
  Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
  And gather dust and chaff, and call
  To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hill and the plains,—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art the reason why,
For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel "I am I"?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams and a stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the fool,
For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision —were it not He?

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

SONG FROM MERLIN AND VIVIEN

In love, if love be love, if love be ours,
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers:
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

It is the little rift within the lute,
That by and by will make the music mute,
And ever widening slowly silence all.

The little rift within the lover's lute,
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

Is it not worth the keeping; let it go:
But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
And trust me not at all or all in all.

RIZPAH

17—

Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, "O mother, come out to me!"
Why should he call me tonight, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

II

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

III

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones, I have hidden them all.
What am I saying? And what are *you?* do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

IV

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may go your way.

VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam, to sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.
"They dared me to do it," he said, and he never has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but a child—
"The farmer dared me to do it," he said; he was always so wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy—he never could rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he would have been one of his best.

VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all was done
He flung it among his fellows—"I'll none of it," said my son.

VIII

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd him for robbing the mail.

They hang'd him in chains for a show—
we had always borne a good name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put
away—isn't that enough shame?
Dust to dust—low down—let us hide!
but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could
stare at him, passing by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and
horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer
who kill'd him and hang'd him there.

IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had
bid him my last good-bye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.
"O mother!" I heard him cry.
I couldn't get back, tho' I tried, he had
something further to say,
And now I shall never know it. The
jailer forced me away.

X

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry
of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up: they
fasten'd me down on my bed.
"Mother, O mother!"—he call'd in the
dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—
you know that I couldn't but hear;
And then at the last they found I had
grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the crea-
tures had worked their will.

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of
my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and
you—will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me,
the bones that had laughed and had
cried—
Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not
theirs—they had moved in my side.

XII

Do you think I was scared by the bones?
I kiss'd 'em, I buried 'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night
by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I
laid him in holy ground.

XIII

They would scratch him up—they would
hang him again on the cursed tree.
Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know—let
all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's
good will toward men—
"Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord"
—let me hear it again;
"Full of compassion and mercy—long
suffering." Yes, oh, yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—
the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap except
for the worst of the worst,
And the first may be last—I have heard
it in church—and the last may be
first.
Suffering—O long suffering—yes, as the
Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind
and the shower and the snow.

XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have told
you he never repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his
mother? are *you* of his kin?

Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child, and the sea that'll moan like a man?

XV

Election, Election[1] and Reprobation[2]—it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him in hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd into my care,
And He means that I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I know not where.

XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your desire—
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy has gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as a stone.

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from the gibbet—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking the walls—
Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-night. I am going. He calls.

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

[1] The Calvinistic doctrine that God elects a few to be saved. [2] eternal damnation

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)

SONG FROM PIPPA PASSES

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

CAVALIER TUNES[3]

I. MARCHING ALONG

Kentish Sir Byng stood for his King,
Bidding the crop-headed[4] Parliament swing:

[3] These lyrics express the feelings of the supporters of the King at three different stages in the struggle against Parliament: the first, at the outbreak of the war; the second, in the middle period when Cromwell was making headway; the third, when Parliament had triumphed.

[4] *I.e.*, Roundheads, close-cropped hair being customary with servants and apprentices.

And, pressing a troop unable to stoop
And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
Marched them along, fifty-score strong,
Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym and such carles [1]
To the Devil that prompts 'em their treasonous parles! [2]
Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
Hands from the pasty, nor bite take nor sup
Till you're—

CHORUS.—*Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen,
singing this song!

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies' knell
Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young Harry as well!
England, good cheer! Rupert is near!
Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here.

CHORUS.—*Marching along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen,
singing this song!

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls [3]
To the Devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
Hold by the right, you double your might;
So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for the fight,

CHORUS.—*March we along, fifty-score strong,*
Great-hearted gentlemen,
singing this song!

[1] churls, rude fellows [2] debates [3] intrigues

II. GIVE A ROUSE

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: [4] here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since?
Who raised me the house that sank once?
Who helped me to gold I spent since?
Who found me in wine you drank once?

CHORUS.—*King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else,
By the old fool's side that begot him?
For whom did he cheer and laugh else
While Noll's [5] damned troopers shot him?

CHORUS.—*King Charles, and who'll do him right now?*
King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
King Charles!

III. BOOT AND SADDLE

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
Rescue my castle before the hot day
Brightens to blue from its silvery gray,

CHORUS—*Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!*

[4] A toast drunk with a full bumper. [5] Oliver Cromwell

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say;
Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
"God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay—

CHORUS—*"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"*

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,
Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Round-heads' array,
Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,

CHORUS—*"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"*

Who? My wife Gertrude; that, honest and gay,
Laughs when you talk of surrendering, "Nay!
I've better counsellors; what counsel they?

CHORUS—*"Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"*

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will

Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

THE LOST LEADER

Just for a handful of silver he left us.
Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
Lost all the others she lets us devote;
They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver,
So much was theirs who so little allowed:
How all our copper had gone for his service!
Rags—were they purple, his heart had been proud!
We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
Lived in his mild and magnificent eye,
Learned his great language, caught his clear accents,
Made him our pattern to live and to die!
Shakespeare was of us, Milton was for us,
Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their graves!
He alone breaks from the van and the freemen,
—He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering,—not through his presence;
Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:
Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more,
One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,
One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,
One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!
Life's night begins: let him never come back to us!
There would be doubt, hesitation and pain,
Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,
Never glad confident morning again!
Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,
Menace our heart ere we master his own;

Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,
Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

LOVE AMONG THE RUINS

Where the quiet-colored end of evening smiles
Miles and miles
On the solitary pastures where our sheep
Half-asleep
Tinkle homeward through the twilight, stray or stop
As they crop—
Was the site once of a city great and gay
(So they say),
Of our country's very capital, its prince
Ages since
Held his court in, gathered councils, wielding far
Peace or war.

Now,—the country does not even boast a tree,
As you see,
To distinguish slopes of verdure, certain rills
From the hills
Intersect and give a name to, (else they run
Into one,)
Where the domed and daring palace shot its spires
Up like fires
O'er the hundred-gated circuit of a wall
Bounding all,
Made of marble, men might march on nor be pressed,
Twelve abreast.

And such plenty and perfection, see, of grass
Never was!
Such a carpet as, this summer-time, o'er-spreads
And embeds
Every vestige of the city, guessed alone,
Stock or stone—
Where a multitude of men breathed joy and woe
Long ago;
Lust of glory pricked their hearts up, dread of shame
Struck them tame;
And that glory and that shame alike, the gold
Bought and sold.

Now,—the single little turret that remains
On the plains,
By the caper overrooted, by the gourd
Overscored,
While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—
Marks the basement whence a tower in ancient time
Sprang sublime,
And a burning ring, all round, the chariots traced
As they raced,
And the monarch and his minions and his dames
Viewed the games.

And I know—while thus the quiet-colored eve
Smiles to leave
To their folding, all our many-tinkling fleece
In such peace,
And the slopes and rills in undistinguished gray
Melt away—
That a girl with eager eyes and yellow hair
Waits me there
In the turret whence the charioteers caught soul
For the goal,
When the king looked, where she looks now, breathless, dumb
Till I come.

But he looked upon the city, every side,
Far and wide,
All the mountains topped with temples, all the glades'
Colonnades,
All the causeys,[1] bridges, aqueducts,—and then,
All the men!
When I do come, she will speak not, she will stand,
Either hand
On my shoulder, give her eyes the first embrace
Of my face,
Ere we rush, ere we extinguish sight and speech
Each on each.

In one year they sent a million fighters forth
South and North,
And they built their gods a brazen pillar high
As the sky,
Yet reserved a thousand chariots in full force—
Gold, of course.
Oh heart! oh blood that freezes, blood that burns!
Earth's returns
For whole centuries of folly, noise and sin!
Shut them in,
With their triumphs and their glories and the rest!
Love is best.

[1] causeways

EVELYN HOPE

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,

Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares,—
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire and dew—
And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

But the time will come,—at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while.
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret: go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

MEETING AT NIGHT

The gray sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
And a voice less loud, through its joys and fears,
Than the two hearts beating each to each!

PARTING AT MORNING

Round the cape of a sudden came the sea,
And the sun looked over the mountain's rim:
And straight was a path of gold for him,
And the need of a world of men for me.

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER

I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all, my life seemed meant for, fails,
  Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
  Your leave for one more last ride with me.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two
  With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.
  Who knows but the world may end to-night?

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-bosomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening-star's at once—
  And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here!—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!
  Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.
  What need to strive with a life awry?
Had I said that, had I done this,
So might I gain, so might I miss.
Might she have loved me? just as well
She might have hated, who can tell!
Where had I been now if the worst befell?
  And here we are riding, she and I.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
Why, all men strive, and who succeeds?
We rode; it seemed my spirit flew,
Saw other regions, cities new,
  As the world rushed by on either side.
I thought,—All labor, yet no less
Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
Look at the end of work, contrast
The petty done, the undone vast,
This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
  I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
What heart alike conceived and dared?
What act proved all its thought had been?
What will but felt the fleshly screen?
  We ride and I see her bosom heave.
There's many a crown for who can reach.
Ten lines,[1] a statesman's life in each!
The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
A soldier's doing! what atones?
They scratch his name on the Abbey[2]-stones.
  My riding is better, by their leave.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
What we felt only; you expressed
You hold things beautiful the best,
  And place them in rhyme so, side by side.

[1] *i.e.* of history or biography
[2] Westminster Abbey

'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but then,
Have you yourself what's best for men?
Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
Nearer one whit your own sublime
Than we who never have turned a rhyme?
Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
A score of years to Art, her slave,
And that's your Venus, whence we turn
To yonder girl that fords the burn!
You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
What, man of music, you grown gray
With notes and nothing else to say,
Is this your sole praise from a friend,
"Greatly his opera's strains intend,
But in music we know how fashions end!"
I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
Proposed bliss here should sublimate
My being—had I signed the bond—
Still one must lead some life beyond,
Have a bliss to die with, dim-descried.
This foot once planted on the goal,
This glory-garland round my soul,
Could I descry such? Try and test!
I sink back shuddering from the quest.
Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

And yet— she has not spoke so long!
What if heaven be that, fair and strong
At life's best, with our eyes upturned
Whither life's flower is first discerned,
We, fixed so, ever should so abide?
What if we still ride on, we two,
With life forever old yet new,
Changed not in kind but in degree,
The instant made eternity,—
And heaven just prove that I and she
Ride, ride together, forever ride?

SAUL

I

Said Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek.
And he: "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have me; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life.

II

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,
And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was unlooped;
I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and gone,
That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on

Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open.
Then once more I prayed,
And opened the foldskirts and entered, and was not afraid
But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!"
And no voice replied.
At the first I saw naught but the blackness: but soon I descried
A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the upright
Main prop which sustains the pavilion: and slow into sight
Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the tent-roof, showed Saul.

IV

He stood as erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide
On the great cross-support in the center, that goes to each side;
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his pangs
And waiting his change, the king-serpent all heavily hangs,
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb.

V

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine round its chords
Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—those sunbeams like swords!
And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after one,
So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's bed;
And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

VI

—Then the tune, for which quails on the cornland will each leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another; and then, what has weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sand house—
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

VII

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song, when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—And then, the last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey—"Bear, bear him along
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets! Are balm-seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.
Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—And then, the glad chaunt
Of the marriage,—first go to young maidens, next, she whom we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.
—And then, the great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends!—
Then, the chorus intoned

As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here: for here in the darkness Saul groaned.

VIII

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart;
And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered: and sparkles 'gan dart
From the jewels that woke in his turban at once with a start,
All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
So the head: but the body still moved not, still hung there erect.
And I bent once again to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
As I sang:—

IX

"Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses forever in joy!
Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword thou didst guard
When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious reward?
Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men sung
The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint tongue
Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and all was for best'?
Then they sung thro' their tears in strong triumph, not much, but the rest.
And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working whence grew
Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit strained true:
And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of wonder and hope,
Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's scope,—
Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine;
And all gifts, which the world offers singly, on one head combine!
On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like the throe
That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go)
High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning them,—all
Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul!"

X

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart, hand, harp and voice,
Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as when, dare I say,
The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains thro' its array,

And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—
"Saul!" cried I, and stopped,
And waited the thing that should follow.
Then Saul, who hung propped
By the tent's cross-support in the center,
was struck by his name.
Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to the aim,
And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he alone,
While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad bust of stone
A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,—leaves grasp of the sheet?
Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his feet,
And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold—
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—all hail, there they are!
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer.
One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse, 'twixt hope and despair.
Death was past, life not come: so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter: 't was Saul as before.
I looked up and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore,
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—
a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely: so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

XI

What spell or what charm,
(For awhile there was trouble within me,) what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him?—Song filled to the verge
His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on what fields,
Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?
He saith, "It is good"; still he drinks not: he lets me praise life,
Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the sheep
Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might lie
'Neath his ken, tho' I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and the sky:
And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained to be passed with my flocks,
Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the rocks,
Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall know!

Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that gains,
And the prudence that keeps what men strive for." And now these old trains
Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the string
Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus—

XIII

"Yea, my King,"
I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that spring
From the mere mortal life held in common by man and by brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—how its stem trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these two, in turn,
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect: yet more was to learn,
E'en the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall stanch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
More indeed, than at first when inconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, tho' clouds spoil him, tho' tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everwhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each ray of thy will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardor, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons, who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the past!
But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last:
As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man—so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine! Look forth o'er the years!
Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the seer's!
Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid arise
A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers: whose fame would ye know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid,—
For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 't is level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's a-wave

With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art!"

XIV

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who didst grant me that day,
And before it not seldom hast granted thy help to essay,
Carry on and complete an adventure,—my shield and my sword
In that act where my soul was thy servant, thy word was my word,—
Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hopeless as ever
On the new stretch of heaven above me —till, mighty to save,
Just one lift of thy hand cleared that distance—God's throne from man's grave!
Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice to my heart
Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I took part,
As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sheep!
For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron retrieves
Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV

I say then,—my song
While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and ever more strong
Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly resumed
His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand replumed
His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the swathes
Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his countenance bathes,
He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of yore,
And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set before.
He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error had bent
The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, tho' much spent
Be the life and the bearing that front you, the same, God did choose,
To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
So sank he along by the tent-prop, till, stayed by the pile
Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there awhile,
And sat out my singing,—one arm round the tent-prop, to raise
His bent head, and the other hung slack —till I touched on the praise
I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I was 'ware
That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
Which were thrust out on each side around me, like oak roots which please
To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
If the best I could do had brought solace: he spoke not, but slow
Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: thro' my hair
The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head, with kind power—

All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized mine—
And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the sign?
I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's heart to dispense!"

XVI

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! outbroke—

XVII

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke:
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my brain
And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—returned him again
His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw:
I report, as man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty tasked
To perceive him, has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was asked.
Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid bare.
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite Care!
Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?
I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to his feet.
Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance, (I laugh as I think)
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot yet, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could love if I durst!
But I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love: I abstain for love's sake.
—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors great and small,
Nine-and-ninety flew ope to our touch, should the hundredth appal?
In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of all?
Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt his own love can compete with it? Here, the parts shift?
Here, the creature surpass the Creator,—the end, what Began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt he alone shall not help him, who yet alone can?
Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less power,
To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,

Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest)
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more, the best?
Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the height
This perfection,—succeed with life's day-spring, death's minute of night?
Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now, —and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself set
Clear and safe in new light and new life, —a new harmony yet
To be run, and continued, and ended—who knows?—or endure!
The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make sure;
By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in this.

XVIII

"I believe it! 'T is thou, God, that givest, 't is I who receive:
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift: thou canst grant it moreover, as prompt to my prayer
As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From thy will, stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread Sabaoth:
I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loth
To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my despair?
This;—'t is not what man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do!
See the King—I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through.
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak thro' me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown—
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with death!
As thy Love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'T is the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

XIX

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got thro' them as hardly, as strugglingly there,

As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed with her crews;
And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to rest.
Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-thrills;
In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling still
Tho' averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and chill
That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with awe:
E'en the serpent that slid away silent,—he felt the new law.
The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the flowers;
The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the vine-bowers:
And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and low,
With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—"E'en so, it is so!"

ANDREA DEL SARTO[1]

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,—but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's:[2] very dear, no less.

[1] This poem was inspired by a portrait of Andrea del Sarto and his wife in the Pitti Palace in Florence.

[2] not even his

You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! no such thing should be—
Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate, 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—

Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself, and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's[1] outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain,
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate[2] who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art—for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—

Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo![3]
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.

[1] A mountain near Florence.
[2] Raphael, most famous of Italian painters, who was born in Urbino.
[3] Michael Angelo

I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau! [1]
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of his grange whose four walls make his world.

How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart,
The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph,[2] what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife"—
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming on his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?),
If really there was such a chance, so lost,—

[1] A palace near Paris.

[2] of my genius

Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi [1] for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!

[1] A *scudo* is worth about a dollar.

No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the new Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard,[1] Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

RABBI BEN EZRA[2]

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in his hand
Who saith "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!

Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

[1] Leonardo da Vinci, another great Italian painter.

[2] Ibu Ezra, or Abenezra (1092-1167), a great Jewish scholar, philosopher, and poet.

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn"?

Not once beat "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou shalt do!"

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.[1]

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:

[1] put on

So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,[1]
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

[1] *Cf.* Isaiah lxiv. 8: "We are the clay and thou our Potter."

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

CONFESSIONS

What is the buzzing in my ears?
"Now that I come to die,
Do I view the world as a vale of tears?"
Ah, reverend sir, not I!

What I viewed there once, what I view again
Where the physic bottles stand
On the table's edge,—is a suburb lane,
With a wall to my bedside hand.

That lane sloped, much as the bottles do,
From a house you could descry
O'er the garden-wall; is the curtain blue
Or green to a healthy eye?

To mine, it serves for the old June weather
Blue above lane and wall;
And that farthest bottle labeled "Ether"
Is the house o'ertopping all.

At a terrace somewhere near the stopper,
There watched for me, one June,
A girl: I know, sir, it's improper,
My poor mind's out of tune.

Only there was a way . . . you crept
Close by the side, to dodge
Eyes in the house, two eyes except:
They styled their house "The Lodge."

What right had a lounger up their lane?
But, by creeping very close,
With the good wall's help,—their eyes might strain
And stretch themselves to Oes,

Yet never catch her and me together,
As she left the attic, there,
By the rim of the bottle labeled "Ether,"
And stole from stair to stair,

And stood by the rose-wreathed gate.
Alas,
We loved, sir—used to meet:
How sad and bad and mad it was—
But then, how it was sweet!

PROSPICE[1]

Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;

[1] Written in the autumn after he lost his wife, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements' rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

YOUTH AND ART

It once might have been, once only:
We lodged in a street together,
You, a sparrow on the housetop lonely,
I, a lone she-bird of his feather.

Your trade was with sticks and clay,
You thumbed, thrust, patted and polished,
Then laughed "They will see some day
Smith made, and Gibson [1] demolished."

My business was song, song, song;
I chirped, cheeped, trilled and twittered,
"Kate Brown's on the boards ere long,
And Grisi's [2] existence embittered!"

I earned no more by a warble
Than you by a sketch in plaster;
You wanted a piece of marble,
I needed a music-master.

We studied hard in our styles,
Chipped each at a crust like Hindoos,
For air, looked out on the tiles,
For fun, watched each other's windows.

You lounged, like a boy of the South,
Cap and blouse—nay, a bit of beard too;
Or you got it, rubbing your mouth
With fingers the clay adhered to.

And I—soon managed to find
Weak points in the flower-fence facing,
Was forced to put up a blind
And be safe in my corset-lacing.

No harm! It was not my fault
If you never turned your eye's tail up
As I shook upon E *in alt*,[3]
Or ran the chromatic scale up:

For spring bade the sparrows pair,
And the boys and girls gave guesses,
And stalls in our street looked rare
With bulrush and watercresses.

Why did not you pinch a flower
In a pellet of clay and fling it?
Why did not I put a power
Of thanks in a look, or sing it?

I did look, sharp as a lynx
(And yet the memory rankles),
When models arrived, some minx
Tripped up-stairs, she and her ankles.

[1] John Gibson (1790-1886), a noted sculptor.

[2] Giulia Grisi, an opera singer of the period.

[3] high E

But I think I gave you as good!
"That foreign fellow,—who can know
How she pays, in a playful mood,
For his tuning her that piano?"

Could you say so, and never say,
"Suppose we join hands and fortunes,
And I fetch her from over the way,
Her, piano, and long tunes and short tunes?"

No, no: you would not be rash,
Nor I rasher and something over:
You've to settle yet Gibson's hash,
And Grisi yet lives in clover.

But you meet the Prince at the Board,
I'm queen myself at *bals-parés*,[1]
I've married a rich old lord,
And you're dubbed knight and an R.A.[2]

Each life unfulfilled, you see;
It hangs still, patchy and scrappy:
We have not sighed deep, laughed free,
Starved, feasted, despaired,—been happy,

And nobody calls you a dunce,
And people suppose me clever:
This could but have happened once,
And we missed it, lost it forever.

WHY I AM A LIBERAL

"Why?" Because all I haply can and do,
All that I am now, all I hope to be,—
Whence comes it save from fortune setting free
Body and soul the purpose to pursue,
God traced for both? If fetters, not a few,
Of prejudice, convention, fall from me,
These shall I bid men—each in his degree
Also God-guided—bear, and gayly too?

But little do or can the best of us:
That little is achieved through Liberty.
Who, then, dares hold, emancipated thus,
His fellow shall continue bound? Not I,
Who live, love, labor freely, nor discuss
A brother's right to freedom. That is "Why."

ASOLANDO

EPILOGUE [3]

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where—by death, fools think, imprisoned—
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
—Pity me?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken!
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel
—Being—who?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

[1] fancy-dress balls

[2] Member of the Royal Academy.

[3] Issued in London Dec. 12, 1889, the day of Browning's death at Venice.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!"

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806–1861)

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE

I

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
"Guess now who hold thee?"—"Death," I said. But, there,
The silver answer rang,—"Not Death, but Love."

VII

The face of all the world is changed, I think,
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
Of life in a new rhythm. The cup of dole
God gave for baptism, I am fain to drink,
And praise its sweetness, Sweet, with thee anear.
The names of country, heaven, are changed away
For where thou art or shalt be, there or here;
And this . . . this lute and song . . . loved yesterday,
(The singing angels know) are only dear
Because thy name moves right in what they say.

XIV

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
Except for love's sake only. Do not say
"I love her for her smile—her look—her way
Of speaking gently,—for a trick of thought
That falls in well with mine, and certes brought
A sense of pleasant ease on such a day"—
For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought,
May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,—
A creature might forget to weep, who bore
Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
But love me for love's sake, that evermore
Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

XXII

When our two souls stand up erect and strong,
Face to face, silent, drawing nigh and nigher,
Until the lengthening wings break into fire
At either curvèd point,—what bitter wrong
Can the earth do to us, that we should not long
Be here contented? Think. In mounting higher,
The angels would press on us, and aspire
To drop some golden orb of perfect song
Into our deep, dear silence. Let us stay
Rather on earth, Belovèd,—where the unfit
Contrarious moods of men recoil away
And isolate pure spirits, and permit
A place to stand and love in for a day,
With darkness and the death-hour rounding it.

XLIII

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
To love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints,—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

REQUIESCAT

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound.
But for peace her soul was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of Death.

PHILOMELA

Hark! ah, the nightingale—
The tawny-throated!
Hark, from that moonlit cedar what a burst!
What triumph! hark!—what pain!

O wanderer from a Grecian shore,
Still, after many years, in distant lands,
Still nourishing in thy bewilder'd brain
That wild, unquench'd, deep-sunken, old-world pain—
Say, will it never heal?
And can this fragrant lawn
With its cool trees, and night,
And the sweet, tranquil Thames,

And moonshine, and the dew,
To thy rack'd heart and brain
Afford no balm?

Dost thou to-night behold,
Here, through the moonlight on this English grass,
The unfriendly palace in the Thracian wild?
Dost thou again peruse
With hot cheeks and sear'd eyes
The too clear web, and thy dumb sister's shame?
Dost thou once more assay
Thy flight, and feel come over thee,
Poor fugitive, the feathery change
Once more, and once more seem to make resound
With love and hate, triumph and agony,
Lone Daulis, and the high Cephissian vale?
Listen, Eugenia—
How thick the bursts come crowding through the leaves!
Again—thou hearest?
Eternal passion!
Eternal pain!

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægæan, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

SELF-DEPENDENCE

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
What I am, and what I ought to be,
At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
"Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"Ah, once more," I cried, "ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!"

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
"Wouldst thou *be* as these are? *Live* as they.

"Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"Bounded by themselves, and unregardful
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see."

O air-born voice! long since, severely clear,
A cry like thine in mine own heart I hear:
"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he,
Who finds himself, loses his misery!"

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
(1828–1882)

THE CLOUD CONFINES

The day is dark and the night
To him that would search their heart;
No lips of cloud that will part
Nor morning song in the light:
Only, gazing alone,
To him wild shadows are shown,
Deep under deep unknown
And height above unknown height.
Still we say as we go,—
"Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day."

The Past is over and fled;
Named new, we name it the old;
Thereof some tale hath been told,
But no word comes from the dead;
Whether at all they be,
Or whether as bond or free,
Or whether they too were we,
Or by what spell they have sped.
Still we say as we go, —
"Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day."

What of the heart of hate
That beats in thy breast, O Time?—
Red strife from the furthest prime,
And anguish of fierce debate;
War that shatters her slain,
And peace that grinds them as grain,
And eyes fixed ever in vain
On the pitiless eyes of Fate.
Still we say as we go,—
"Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day."

What of the heart of love
That bleeds in thy breast, O Man?—
Thy kisses snatched 'neath the ban
Of fangs that mock them above;

Thy bells prolonged unto knells,
Thy hope that a breath dispels,
Thy bitter forlorn farewells
And the empty echoes thereof?
Still we say as we go,—
"Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day."

The sky leans dumb on the sea,
Aweary with all its wings;
And oh! the song the sea sings
Is dark everlastingly.
Our past is clean forgot,
Our present is and is not,
Our future's a sealed seedplot,
And what betwixt them are we?—
We who say as we go,—
"Strange to think by the way,
Whatever there is to know,
That shall we know one day."

THREE SHADOWS

I looked and saw your eyes
In the shadow of your hair,
As a traveler sees the stream
In the shadow of the wood;
And I said, "My faint heart sighs,
Ah me! to linger there,
To drink deep and to dream
In that sweet solitude."

I looked and saw your heart
In the shadow of your eyes,
As a seeker sees the gold
In the shadow of the stream;
And I said, "Ah me! what art
Should win the immortal prize,
Whose want must make life cold
And Heaven a hollow dream?"

I looked and saw your love
In the shadow of your heart,
As a diver sees the pearl
In the shadow of the sea;
And I murmured, not above
My breath, but all apart,—
"Ah! you can love, true girl,
And is your love for me?"

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE (1837–1909)

CHORUSES FROM ATALANTA IN CALYDON

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus,
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night.

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,
Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
For the stars and the winds are unto her

As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot,
The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
From leaf to flower and flower to fruit;
And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
And the oat is heard above the lyre,
And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
Follows with dancing and fills with delight
The Mænad and the Bassarid;
And soft as lips that laugh and hide
The laughing leaves of the trees divide,
And screen from seeing and leave in sight
The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies.

II

Before the beginning of years,
There came to the making of man
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven,
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath;
Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death.

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea;
And dust of the laboring earth;
And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
And fashioned with loathing and love,
With life before and after
And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow,
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life;
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labor and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways,
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.

His speech is a burning fire;
With his lips he travaileth;
In his heart a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision
Between asleep and a sleep.

THE GARDEN OF PROSERPINE

Here, where the world is quiet,
Here, where all trouble seems
Dead winds' and spent waves' riot
In doubtful dreams of dreams;
I watch the green field growing
For reaping folk and sowing,
For harvest-time and mowing,
A sleepy world of streams.

I am tired of tears and laughter,
And men that laugh and weep,
Of what may come hereafter
For men that sow to reap:
I am weary of days and hours,
Blown buds of barren flowers,
Desires and dreams and powers
And everything but sleep.

Here life has death for neighbor,
And far from eye or ear
Wan waves and wet winds labor,
Weak ships and spirits steer;
They drift adrift, and whither
They wot not who make thither;
But no such winds blow hither,
And no such things grow here.

No growth of moor or coppice,
No heather-flower or vine,
But bloomless buds of poppies,
Green grapes of Proserpine,
Pale beds of blowing rushes,
Where no leaf blooms or blushes
Save this whereout she crushes
For dead men deadly wine.

Pale, without name or number,
In fruitless fields of corn,
They bow themselves and slumber
All night till light is born;
And like a soul belated,
In hell and heaven unmated,
By cloud and mist abated
Comes out of darkness morn.

Though one were strong as seven,
He too with death shall dwell,
Nor wake with wings in heaven,
Nor weep for pains in hell;
Though one were fair as roses,
His beauty clouds and closes;
And well though love reposes,
In the end it is not well.

Pale, beyond porch and portal,
Crowned with calm leaves, she stands
Who gathers all things mortal
With cold immortal hands;
Her languid lips are sweeter
Than love's who fears to greet her,
To men that mix and meet her
From many times and lands.

She waits for each and other,
She waits for all men born;
Forgets the earth her mother,
The life of fruits and corn;
And spring and seed and swallow
Take wing for her and follow
Where summer song rings hollow
And flowers are put to scorn.

There go the loves that wither,
The old loves with wearier wings;
And all dead years draw thither,
And all disastrous things;
Dead dreams of days forsaken,
Blind buds that snows have shaken,
Wild leaves that winds have taken,
Red strays of ruined springs.

We are not sure of sorrow,
And joy was never sure;

Today will die tomorrow;
Time stoops to no man's lure;
And love, grown faint and fretful,
With lips but half regretful
Sighs, and with eyes forgetful
Weeps that no loves endure.

From too much love of living,
From hope and fear set free,
We thank with brief thanksgiving
Whatever gods may be
That no life lives for ever;
That dead men rise up never;
That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Then star nor sun shall waken,
Nor any chance of light:
Nor sound of waters shaken,
Nor any sound or sight:
Nor wintry leaves nor vernal,
Nor days nor things diurnal;
Only the sleep eternal
In an eternal night.

THE OBLATION

Ask nothing more of me, sweet;
All I can give you I give.
Heart of my heart, were it more,
More would be laid at your feet:
Love that should help you to live,
Song that would spur you to soar.

All things were nothing to give
Once to have sense of you more,
Touch you and taste of you sweet,
Think you and breathe you and live,
Swept of your wings as they soar,
Trodden by chance of your feet.

I that have love and no more
Give you but love of you, sweet:
He that hath more, let him give;
He that hath wings, let him soar;
Mine is the heart at your feet
Here, that must love you to live.

A MATCH

If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf,
Our lives would grow together,
In sad or singing weather,
Blown fields or flowerful closes,
Green pleasure or grey grief;
If love were what the rose is,
And I were like the leaf.

If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon;
If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune.

If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death,
We'd shine and snow together
Ere March made sweet the weather
With daffodil and starling
And hours of fruitful breath;
If you were life, my darling,
And I your love were death.

If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy,
We'd play for lives and seasons
With loving looks and treasons
And tears of night and morrow
And laughs of maid and boy;
If you were thrall to sorrow,
And I were page to joy.

If you were April's lady,
And I were lord to May,
We'd throw with leaves for hours
And draw for days with flowers,
Till day like night were shady
And night were bright like day;
If you were April's lady,
And I were lord to May.

If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,
Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain.

A FORSAKEN GARDEN

In a coign of the cliff between lowland and highland,
At the sea-down's edge between windward and lee,
Walled round with rocks as an inland island,
The ghost of a garden fronts the sea.
A girdle of brushwood and thorn encloses
The steep square slope of the blossomless bed
Where the weeds that grew green from the graves of its roses
Now lie dead.

The fields fall southward, abrupt and broken,
To the low last edge of the long lone land.
If a step should sound or a word be spoken,
Would a ghost not rise at the strange guest's hand?
So long have the gray bare walks lain guestless,
Through branches and briars if a man make way,
He shall find no life but the sea-wind's, restless
Night and day.

The dense hard passage is blind and stifled
That crawls by a track none turn to climb
To the strait waste place that the years have rifled
Of all but the thorns that are touched not of time.
The thorn he spares when the rose is taken;
The rocks are left when he wastes the plain;
The wind that wanders, the weeds wind-shaken,
These remain.

Not a flower to be pressed of the foot that falls not;
As the heart of a dead man the seed-plots are dry;
From the thicket of thorns whence the nightingale calls not,
Could she call, there were never a rose to reply.
Over the meadows that blossom and wither
Rings but the note of a sea-bird's song,
Only the sun and the rain come hither
All year long.

The sun burns sear and the rain dishevels
One gaunt bleak blossom of scentless breath.
Only the wind here hovers and revels
In a round where life seems barren as death.
Here there was laughing of old, there was weeping,
Haply, of lovers none ever will know,
Whose eyes went seaward a hundred sleeping
Years ago.

Heart handfast in heart as they stood, "Look thither,"
Did he whisper? "look forth from the flowers to the sea:
For the foam-flowers endure when the rose-blossoms wither,
And men that love lightly may die—but we?

And the same wind sang and the same waves whitened,
And or ever the garden's last petals were shed,
In the lips that had whispered, the eyes that had lightened,
Love was dead.

Or they loved their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end—but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave.

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea.
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers,
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep.

Here death may deal not again for ever;
Here change may come not till all change end.
From the graves they have made they shall rise up never,
Who have left nought living to ravage and rend.
Earth, stones, and thorns of the wild ground growing,
While the sun and the rain live, these shall be;
Till a last wind's breath upon all these blowing
Roll the sea.

Till the slow sea rise, and the sheer cliff crumble,
Till terrace and meadow the deep gulfs drink,
Till the strength of the waves of the high tides humble
The fields that lessen, the rocks that shrink,
Here now in his triumph where all things falter,
Stretched out on the spoils that his own hand spread,
As a god self-slain on his own strange altar,
Death lies dead.

A CHILD'S LAUGHTER

All the bells of heaven may ring,
All the birds of heaven may sing,
All the wells on earth may spring,
All the winds on earth may bring
All sweet sounds together;
Sweeter far than all things heard,
Hand of harper, tone of bird,
Sound of woods at sundawn stirred,
Welling water's winsome word,
Wind in warm wan weather.

One thing yet there is, that none
Hearing ere its chime be done
Knows not well the sweetest one
Heard of man beneath the sun,
Hoped in heaven hereafter;
Soft and strong and loud and light,
Very sound of very light
Heard from morning's rosiest height,
When the soul of all delight
Fills a child's clear laughter.

Golden bells of welcome rolled
Never forth such notes, nor told
Hours so blithe in tones so bold,
As the radiant mouth of gold
  Here that rings forth heaven.
If the golden-crested wren
Were a nightingale—why, then
Something seen and heard of men
Might be half as sweet as when
  Laughs a child of seven.

CHILD AND POET

You send me your love in a letter,
  I send you my love in a song:
Ah child, your gift is the better,
  Mine does you but wrong.

No fame, were the best less brittle,
  No praise, were it wide as earth,
Is worth so much as a little
  Child's love may be worth.

We see the children above us
  As they might angels above:
Come back to us, child, if you love us,
  And bring us your love.

ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT BROWNING

He held no dream worth waking: so he said,
He who stands now on death's triumphal steep,
Awakened out of life wherein we sleep
And dream of what he knows and sees, being dead.
But never death for him was dark or dread:
"Look forth," he bade the soul, and fear not. Weep,
All ye that trust not in his truth, and keep
Vain memory's vision of a vanished head
As all that lives of all that once was he
Save that which lightens from his word: but we,
Who, seeing the sunset-colored waters roll,
Yet know the sun subdued not of the sea,
Nor weep nor doubt that still the spirit is whole,
And life and death but shadows of the soul.

GEORGE MEREDITH (1828–1909)

MODERN LOVE

I

By this he knew she wept with waking eyes:
That, at his hand's light quiver by her head,
The strange low sobs that shook their common bed
Were called into her with a sharp surprise,
And strangled mute, like little gaping snakes,
Dreadfully venomous to him. She lay
Stone-still, and the long darkness flowed away
With muffled pulses. Then, as midnight makes
Her giant heart of Memory and Tears
Drink the pale drug of silence, and so beat
Sleep's heavy measure, they from head to feet
Were moveless, looking through their dead black years,
By vain regret scrawled over the blank wall.
Like sculptured effigies they might be seen
Upon their marriage-tomb, the sword between;
Each wishing for the sword that severs all.

VIII

Yet it was plain she struggled, and that salt
Of righteous feeling made her pitiful.
Poor twisting worm, so queenly beautiful!
Where came the cleft between us? whose the fault?
My tears are on thee, that have rarely dropped
As balm for any bitter wound of mine:
My breast will open for thee at a sign!
But, no: we are two reed-pipes, coarsely stopped:
The God once filled them with his mellow breath;
And they were music till he flung them down,
Used! used! Hear now the discord-loving clown
Puff his gross spirit in them, worse than death!
I do not know myself without thee more:
In this unholy battle I grow base:
If the same soul be under the same face,
Speak, and a taste of that old time restore!

X

But where began the change; and what's my crime?
The wretch condemned, who has not been arraigned,
Chafes at his sentence. Shall I, unsustained,
Drag on Love's nerveless body thro' all time?
I must have slept, since now I wake. Prepare,
You lovers, to know Love a thing of moods:
Not, like hard life, of laws. In Love's deep woods,
I dreamt of loyal Life:—the offence is there!
Love's jealous woods about the sun are curled;
At least, the sun far brighter there did beam.—
My crime is, that the puppet of a dream,
I plotted to be worthy of the world.
Oh, had I with my darling helped to mince
The facts of life, you still had seen me go
With hindward feather and with forward toe,
Her much-adored delightful Fairy Prince!

XII

Not solely that the Future she destroys,
And the fair life which in the distance lies
For all men, beckoning out from dim rich skies:
Nor that the passing hour's supporting joys
Have lost the keen-edged flavor, which begat
Distinction in old times, and still should breed
Sweet Memory, and Hope,—earth's modest seed,
And heaven's high-prompting: not that the world is flat
Since that soft-luring creature I embraced
Among the children of Illusion went:
Methinks with all this loss I were content,
If the mad Past, on which my foot is based,
Were firm, or might be blotted: but the whole
Of life is mixed: the mocking Past will stay:
And if I drink oblivion of a day,
So shorten I the stature of my soul.

XVII

At dinner, she is hostess, I am host.
Went the feast ever cheerfuller? She keeps

The Topic over intellectual deeps
In buoyancy afloat. They see no ghost.
With sparkling surface-eyes we ply the ball:
It is in truth a most contagious game:
HIDING THE SKELETON, shall be its name.
Such play as this the devils might appal!
But here's the greater wonder; in that we,
Enamored of an acting nought can tire,
Each other, like true hypocrites, admire;
Warm-lighted looks, Love's ephemerioe,
Shoot gaily o'er the dishes and the wine.
We waken envy of our happy lot.
Fast, sweet, and golden, shows the marriage-knot.
Dear guests, you now have seen Love's corpse-light shine.

XX

I am not of those miserable males
Who sniff at vice and, daring not to snap,
Do therefore hope for heaven. I take the hap
Of all my deeds. The wind that fills my sails
Propels; but I am helmsman. Am I wrecked,
I know the devil has sufficient weight
To bear: I lay it not on him, or fate.
Besides, he's damned. That man I do suspect
A coward, who would burden the poor deuce
With what ensues from his own slipperiness.
I have just found a wanton-scented tress
In an old desk, dusty for lack of use.
Of days and nights it is demonstrative,
That, like some aged star, gleam luridly.
If for those times I must ask charity,
Have I not any charity to give?

XLI

How many a thing which we cast to the ground,
When others pick it up becomes a gem!
We grasp at all the wealth it is to them;
And by reflected light its worth is found.
Yet for us still 'tis nothing! and that zeal
Of false appreciation quickly fades.
This truth is little known to human shades,
How rare from their own instinct 'tis to feel!
They waste the soul with spurious desire,
That is not the ripe flame upon the bough.
We two have taken up a lifeless vow
To rob a living passion: dust for fire!
Madam is grave, and eyes the clock that tells
Approaching midnight. We have struck despair
Into two hearts. O, look we like a pair
Who for fresh nuptials joyfully yield all else?

XLVI

At last we parley: we so strangely dumb
In such a close communion! It befell
About the sounding of the Matin-bell,
And lo! her place was vacant, and the hum
Of loneliness was round me. Then I rose,
And my disordered brain did guide my foot
To that old wood where our first love-salute
Was interchanged: the source of many throes!
There did I see her, not alone. I moved
Toward her, and made proffer of my arm.
She took it simply, with no rude alarm;
And that disturbing shadow passed reproved.
I felt the pained speech coming, and declared
My firm belief in her, ere she could speak.
A ghastly morning came into her cheek,
While with a widening soul on me she stared.

L

Thus piteously Love closed what he begat:
The union of this ever-diverse pair!
These two were rapid falcons in a snare,
Condemned to do the flitting of the bat.
Lovers beneath the singing sky of May,
They wandered once; clear as the dew on flowers:
But they fed not on the advancing hours:
Their hearts held cravings for the buried day.

Then each applied to each that fatal knife,
Deep questioning, which probes to endless dole.
Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life!—
In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse,
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

VICTORIAN NARRATIVE POETRY

Although Tennyson's poetic gifts were primarily those of a lyric poet, he wrote many narratives that contributed much to his fame among his contemporaries. Of the longer poems, *The Princess,* dealing with the education and social development of woman, and *Maud,* with its background of the Crimean War, are now read less frequently than the more ambitious *Idylls of the King,* in which the poet interpreted for his age the story of the old Arthurian romances.

The poems that make up the *Idylls of the King* were written at different times between 1842 and 1885, but the stories of King Arthur had always seemed to Tennyson "the greatest of all poetical subjects." The central theme that gives a sort of epic unity to the different poems is "sense at war with soul," exemplified in the defeat of Arthur's high purposes by the weaknesses and disloyalties of others. *Guinevere* represents the dramatic climax of the story, and shows Tennyson's symbolism at its height. The story is much less important to the poet than its significance. The wonderful adventures and the marvels of old romance have all but disappeared and the allegorical interpretation, supporting Tennyson's belief in conventional morality, is made much of. The beauty of the poem lies less in the characters and the story than in the finely shaded rhythms, the form and color of the verse, and the artistic phrasing.

Sohrab and Rustum comes closer to the old epic manner than any of the other narratives of the period, for Matthew Arnold was a lover of Homer. It may appropriately be called an heroic tale, for it presents a crisis in the lives of two leaders of warring hosts, both essentially noble figures. The style is in keeping, dignified, reserved, duly subordinated to the action and the character.

William Morris was both a "dreamer of dreams" and an avowed disciple of Chaucer. He loved the Middle Ages as he disliked the materialistic spirit of his own age, and he had the ability to relate long narratives in verse with ease and fluency. *The Haystack in the Floods* is a romantic tale written realistically, with much of the dramatic intensity of life in medieval times.

Rossetti's *The Blessed Damozel* has the form of a ballad but is really a succession of beautiful pictures, set forth simply and sincerely by a poet who was also a painter. Although there is a slight narrative framework the poem is markedly lyrical in its emphasis upon the feelings of two lovers, one in heaven, one on earth,—both unhappy.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON
(1809–1892)

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot; [1]
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs forever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
Down to tower'd Camelot;
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

[1] The legendary city of King Arthur in Cornwall.

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colors gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot or an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
And sometimes through the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot;
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,

And flamed upon the brazen greaves[1]
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight forever kneel'd,
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.[2]
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot;
And from his blazon'd baldric[3] slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armor rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewel'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot;
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

[1] The portion of the knight's armor below the knees.
[2] The Milky Way.
[3] Belt worn over the shoulder and across the body.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights of Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in His mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

GUINEVERE

Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat
There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little maid,
A novice: one low light betwixt them burn'd
Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all abroad,
Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to the face,
Clung to the dead earth, and the land was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of flight
Sir Modred; he that like a subtle beast
Lay couchant with his eyes upon the throne,
Ready to spring, waiting a chance: for this
He chill'd the popular praises of the King
With silent smiles of slow disparagement;
And tamper'd with the Lords of the White Horse,
Heathen, the brood by Hengist left; and sought
To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds
Serving his traitorous end; and all his aims
Were sharpen'd by strong hate for Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when all the court,
Green-suited, but with plumes that mock'd the may,
Had been, their wont, a-maying and return'd,
That Modred still in green, all ear and eye,
Climb'd to the high top of the garden-wall
To spy some secret scandal if he might,
And saw the Queen who sat betwixt her best
Enid, and lissome[1] Vivien, of her court
The wiliest and the worst; and more than this
He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing by
Spied where he couch'd, and as the gardener's hand
Picks from the colewort a green caterpillar,
So from the high wall and the flowering grove
Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by the heel,
And cast him as a worm upon the way;
But when he knew the Prince tho' marr'd with dust,
He, reverencing king's blood in a bad man,
Made such excuses as he might, and these
Full knightly without scorn; for in those days
No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in scorn;

[1] lithesome

But, if a man were halt or hunch'd, in him
By those whom God had made full-limb'd and tall,
Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,
And he was answer'd softly by the King
And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot holp
To raise the Prince, who rising twice or thrice
Full sharply smote his knees, and smiled, and went:
But, ever after, the small violence done
Rankled in him and ruffled all his heart,
As the sharp wind that ruffles all day long
A little bitter pool about a stone
On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
This matter to the Queen, at first she laugh'd
Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty fall,
Then shudder'd, as the village wife who cries
"I shudder, some one steps across my grave;"
Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for indeed
She half-foresaw that he, the subtle beast,
Would track her guilt until he found, and hers
Would be for evermore a name of scorn.
Henceforward rarely could she front in hall,
Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy face,
Heart-hiding smile, and gray persistent eye:
Henceforward too, the Powers that tend the soul,
To help it from the death that cannot die,
And save it even in extremes, began
To vex and plague her. Many a time for hours,
Beside the placid breathings of the King,
In the dead night, grim faces came and went
Before her, or a vague spiritual fear—
Like to some doubtful noise of creaking doors,
Heard by the watcher in a haunted house,
That keeps the rust of murder on the walls—
Held her awake: or if she slept, she dream'd
An awful dream; for then she seem'd to stand
On some vast plain before a setting sun,
And from the sun there swiftly made at her
A ghastly something, and its shadow flew
Before it till it touch'd her, and she turn'd—
When lo! her own, that broadening from her feet,
And blackening, swallow'd all the land, and in it
Far cities burnt, and with a cry she woke.
And all this trouble did not pass but grew;
Till ev'n the clear face of the guileless King,
And trustful courtesies of household life,
Became her bane; and at the last she said,
"O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine own land,
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again, some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal break and blaze
Before the people, and our lord the King."
And Lancelot ever promised, but remain'd,
And still they met and met. Again she said,
"O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee hence."
And then they were agreed upon a night
(When the good King should not be there) to meet
And part for ever. Vivien lurking, heard.
She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale they met

And greeted. Hands in hands, and eye to eye,
Low on the border of her couch they sat
Stammering and staring. It was their last hour,
A madness of farewells. And Modred brought
His creatures to the basement of the tower
For testimony; and crying with full voice
"Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at last," aroused
Lancelot, who rushing outward lionlike
Leapt on him, and hurl'd him headlong, and he fell
Stunn'd, and his creatures took and bare him off,
And all was still: then she, "The end is come,
And I am shamed for ever;" and he said,
"Mine be the shame; mine was the sin: but rise,
And fly to my strong castle overseas:
There will I hide thee, till my life shall end,
There hold thee with my life against the world."
She answer'd, "Lancelot, wilt thou hold me so?
Nay, friend, for we have taken our farewells.
Would God that thou couldst hide me from myself!
Mine is the shame, for I was wife, and thou
Unwedded: yet rise now, and let us fly,
For I will draw me into sanctuary,
And bide my doom." So Lancelot got her horse,
Set her thereon, and mounted on his own,
And then they rode to the divided way,
There kiss'd, and parted weeping: for he past,
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury
Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald [1]
And heard the Spirits of the waste and weald
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard the moan:
And in herself she moan'd "Too late, too late!"
Till in the cold wind that foreruns the morn,
A blot in heaven, the Raven, flying high,
Croak'd, and she thought, "He spies a field of death;
For now the Heathen of the Northern Sea,
Lured by the crimes and frailties of the court,
Begin to slay the folk, and spoil the land."

And when she came to Almesbury she spake
There to the nuns, and said, "Mine enemies
Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sisterhood,
Receive, and yield me sanctuary, nor ask
Her name to whom ye yield it, till her time
To tell you:" and her beauty, grace and power,
Wrought as a charm upon them, and they spared
To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
For many a week, unknown, among the nuns;
Nor with them mix'd, nor told her name, nor sought,
Wrapt in her grief, for housel [2] or for shrift,[3]
But communed only with the little maid,
Who pleased her with a babbling heedlessness

[1] open country
[2] the Eucharist
[3] confession

Which often lured her from herself; but now,
This night, a rumor wildly blown about
Came, that Sir Modred had usurp'd the realm,
And leagued him with the heathen, while the King
Was waging war on Lancelot: then she thought,
"With what a hate the people and the King
Must hate me," and bow'd down upon her hands
Silent, until the little maid, who brook'd
No silence, brake it, uttering "Late! so late!
What hour, I wonder, now?" and when she drew
No answer, by and by began to hum
An air the nuns had taught her: "Late, so late!"
Which when she heard, the Queen look'd up, and said,
"O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
Sing, and unbind my heart that I may weep."
Whereat full willingly sang the little maid.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

"No light: so late! and dark and chill the night!
O let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late: ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now."

So sang the novice, while full passionately,
Her head upon her hands, remembering
Her thought when first she came, wept the sad Queen.
Then said the little novice prattling to her:

"O pray you, noble lady, weep no more;
But let my words, the words of one so small,
Who knowing nothing knows but to obey,
And if I do not there is penance given—
Comfort your sorrows; for they do not flow
From evil done; right sure am I of that,
Who see your tender grace and stateliness.
But weigh your sorrows with our lord the King's,
And weighing find them less; for gone is he
To wage grim war against Sir Lancelot there,
Round that strong castle where he holds the Queen;
And Modred whom he left in charge of all,
The traitor—Ah sweet lady, the King's grief
For his own self, and his own Queen, and realm,
Must needs be thrice as great as any of ours.
For me, I thank the saints, I am not great.
For if there ever come a grief to me
I cry my cry in silence, and have done.
None knows it, and my tears have brought me good:
But even were the griefs of little ones
As great as those of great ones, yet this grief

Is added to the griefs the great must bear,
That howsoever much they may desire
Silence, they cannot weep behind a cloud:
As even here they talk at Almesbury
About the good King and his wicked Queen,
And were I such a King with such a Queen,
Well might I wish to veil her wickedness,
But were I such a King, it could not be."

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd the Queen,
"Will the child kill me with her innocent talk?"
But openly she answer'd, "Must not I,
If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm?"

"Yea," said the maid, "this is all woman's grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders, there
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen."

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
"Will the child kill me with her foolish prate?"
But openly she spake and said to her,
"O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery?"

To whom the little novice garrulously,
"Yea, but I know: the land was full of signs
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So said my father, and himself was knight
Of the great Table—at the founding of it;
And rode thereto from Lyonnesse, and he said
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused, and turning—there,
All down the lonely coast of Lyonnesse,
Each with a beacon star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,
He saw them—headland after headland flame
Far on into the rich heart of the west:
And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father—yea, and furthermore,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods,
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,
That shook beneath them, as the thistle shakes
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed:
And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke

Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke
Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;
And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dream'd; for every knight
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
While the wine ran: so glad were spirits and men
Before the coming of the sinful Queen."

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,
"Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,
Spirits and men: could none of them foresee,
Not even thy wise father with his signs
And wonders, what has fall'n upon the realm?"

To whom the novice garrulously again,
"Yea, one, a bard; of whom my father said,
Full many a noble war-song had he sung,
Ev'n in the presence of an enemy's fleet,
Between the steep cliff and the coming wave;
And many a mystic lay of life and death
Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops,
When round him bent the spirits of the hills
With all their dewy hair blown back like flame:
So said my father—and that night the bard
Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King
As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at those
Who call'd him the false son of Gorloïs:
For there was no man knew from whence he came;
But after tempest, when the long wave broke
All down the thundering shores of Bude [1] and Bos,[1]
There came a day as still as heaven, and then
They found a naked child upon the sands
Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish set;
And that was Arthur; and they foster'd him
Till he by miracle was approven King:
And that his grave should be a mystery
From all men, like his birth; and could he find
A woman in her womanhood as great
As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,
The twain together well might change the world.
But even in the middle of his song
He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,
And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fall'n,
But that they stay'd him up; nor would he tell
His vision; but what doubt that he foresaw
This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen?"

Then thought the Queen, "Lo! they have set her on,
Our simple-seeming Abbess and her nuns,
To play upon me," and bow'd her head nor spake.
Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,
Shame on her own garrulity garrulously,
Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue
Full often, "and, sweet lady, if I seem

[1] Small towns on the coast of Cornwall.

To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,
Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales
Which my good father told me, check me too,
Nor let me shame my father's memory, one
Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say
Sir Lancelot had the noblest; and he died,
Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,
And left me; but of others who remain,
And of the two first-famed for courtesy—
And pray you check me if I ask amiss—
But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved
Among them, Lancelot, or our lord the King?"

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her,
"Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,
Was gracious to all ladies, and the same
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and the King
In open battle or the tilting-field
Forbore his own advantage, and these two
Were the most nobly-manner'd men of all;
For manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature, and of noble mind."

"Yea," said the maid, "be manners such fair fruit?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thousand-fold
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the world."

To which a mournful answer made the Queen:
"O closed about by narrowing nunnery-walls,
What knowest thou of the world, and all its lights
And shadows, all the wealth and all the woe?
If ever Lancelot, that most noble knight,
Were for one hour less noble than himself,
Pray for him that he scape the doom of fire,
And weep for her who drew him to his doom."

"Yea," said the little novice, "I pray for both;
But I should all as soon believe that his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours would be
Such as they are, were you the sinful Queen."

So she, like many another babbler, hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd where she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful heat
Fired all the pale face of the Queen, who cried,
"Such as thou art be never maiden more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to plague
And play upon, and harry me, petty spy
And traitress." When that storm of anger brake
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden rose,
White as her veil, and stood before the Queen
As tremulously as foam upon the beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and fly,
And when the Queen had added, "Get thee hence,"
Fled frighted. Then that other left alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart again,
Saying in herself, "The simple, fearful child
Meant nothing, but my own too-fearful guilt,
Simpler than any child, betrays itself.
But help me, heaven, for surely I repent.

For what is true repentance but in thought—
Not ev'n in inmost thought to think again
The sins that made the past so pleasant to us:
And I have sworn never to see him more,
To see him more."

And ev'n in saying this,
Her memory from old habit of the mind
Went slipping back upon the golden days
In which she saw him first, when Lancelot came,
Reputed the best knight and goodliest man,
Ambassador, to lead her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far ahead
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on love
And sport and tilts and pleasure (for the time
Was maytime, and as yet no sin was dream'd),
Rode under groves that look'd a paradise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth
That seem'd the heavens upbreaking thro' the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every day
Beheld at noon in some delicious dale
The silk pavilions of King Arthur raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they saw
The Dragon [1] of the great Pendragonship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent well.

But when the Queen immersed in such a trance,
And moving thro' the past unconsciously,
Came to that point where first she saw the King
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd to find
Her journey done, glanced at him, thought him cold,
High, self-contain'd, and passionless, not like him,
"Not like my Lancelot"—while she brooded thus
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts again,
There rode an armed warrior to the doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nunnery ran,
Then on a sudden a cry, "The King!" She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when armed feet
Thro' the long gallery from the outer doors
Rang coming, prone from off her seat she fell,
And grovell'd with her face against the floor:
There with her milkwhite arms and shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from the King:
And in the darkness heard his armed feet
Pause by her; then came silence, then a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but, tho' changed, the King's:

"Liest thou here so low, the child of one
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy shame?
Well is it that no child is born of thee.
The children born of thee are sword and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the Godless hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the Northern Sea;
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my right arm,

[1] Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon.

The mightiest of my knights, abode with me,
Have everywhere about this land of Christ
In twelve great battles ruining overthrown.
And knowest thou now from whence I come—from him,
From waging bitter war with him: and he,
That did not shun to smite me in worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him left,
He spared to lift his hand against the King
Who made him knight: but many a knight was slain;
And many more, and all his kith and kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own land.
And many more when Modred raised revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty, clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with me.
And of this remnant will I leave a part,
True men who love me still, for whom I live,
To guard thee in the wild hour coming on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be harm'd.
Fear not: thou shalt be guarded till my death.
Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
Have err'd not, that I march to meet my doom.
Thou hast not made my life so sweet to me,
That I the King should greatly care to live;
For thou hast spoilt the purpose of my life.
Bear with me for the last time while I show,
Ev'n for thy sake, the sin which thou hast sinn'd.
For when the Roman left us, and their law
Relax'd its hold upon us, and the ways
Were fill'd with rapine, here and there a deed
Of prowess done redress'd a random wrong.
But I was first of all the kings who drew
The knighthood-errant of this realm and all
The realms together under me, their Head,
In that fair Order of my Table Round,
A glorious company, the flower of men,
To serve as model for the mighty world,
And be the fair beginning of a time.
I made them lay their hands in mine and swear
To reverence the King, as if he were
Their conscience, and their conscience as their King,
To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
To honor his own word as if his God's,
To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
And worship her by years of noble deeds,
Until they won her; for indeed I knew
Of no more subtle master under heaven
Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
Not only to keep down the base in man,
But teach high thought, and amiable words
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.
And all this throve before I wedded thee,
Believing, "Lo mine helpmate, one to feel
My purpose and rejoicing in my joy."
Then came thy shameful sin with Lancelot;
Then came the sin of Tristram and Isolt:

Then others, following these my mightiest knights,
And drawing foul ensample from fair names,
Sinn'd also, till the loathsome opposite
Of all my heart had destined did obtain,
And all thro' thee! so that this life of mine
I guard as God's high gift from scathe and wrong,
Not greatly care to lose; but rather think
How sad it were for Arthur, should he live,
To sit once more within his lonely hall,
And miss the wonted number of my knights,
And miss to hear high talk of noble deeds
As in the golden days before thy sin.
For which of us, who might be left, could speak
Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance at thee?
And in thy bowers of Camelot or of Usk
Thy shadow still would glide from room to room,
And I should evermore be vext with thee
In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
Or ghostly footfall echoing on the stair.
For think not, tho' thou wouldst not love thy lord,
Thy lord has wholly lost his love for thee.
I am not made of so slight elements.
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy shame.
I hold that man the worst of public foes
Who either for his own or children's sake,
To save his blood from scandal, lets the wife
Whom he knows false, abide and rule the house:
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
Her station, taken everywhere for pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes, and saps
The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns!
Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
The mockery of my people, and their bane."

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
Then waiting by the doors the warhorse neigh'd
As at a friend's voice, and he spake again:

"Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes;
I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
The doom of treason and the flaming death,
(When first I learnt thee hidden here) is past.
The pang—which while I weigh'd thy heart with one
Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
Made my tears burn—is also past—in part.
And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives: do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,

And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee—
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's: nay, they never were the King's.
I cannot take thy hand; that too is flesh,
And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd; and mine own flesh,
Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,
'I loathe thee:' yet not less, O Guinevere,
For I was ever virgin save for thee,
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure
We too may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.
Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow:
They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
Far down to that great battle in the west,
Where I must strike against the man they call
My sister's son—no kin of mine, who leagues
With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
Traitors—and strike him dead, and meet myself
Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
And thou remaining here wilt learn the event;
But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side; see thee no more—
Farewell!"

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
And in the darkness o'er her fallen head,
Perceived the waving of his hands that blest.

Then, listening till those armed steps were gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her anguish found
The casement: "peradventure," so she thought,
"If I might see his face, and not be seen."
And lo, he sat on horseback at the door!
And near him the sad nuns with each a light
Stood, and he gave them charge about the Queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm was lower'd,
To which for crest the golden dragon clung
Of Britain; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragonship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of fire.
And even then he turn'd; and more and more
The moony vapor rolling round the King,
Who seem'd the phantom of a Giant in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray

And grayer, till himself became as mist
Before her, moving ghostlike to his doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and cried aloud
"O Arthur!" there her voice brake suddenly,
Then—as a stream that spouting from a cliff
Fails in mid air, but gathering at the base
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the vale—
Went on in passionate utterance:

"Gone—my lord!
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be slain!
And he forgave me, and I could not speak.
Farewell? I should have answer'd his farewell.
His mercy choked me. Gone, my lord the King,
My own true lord! how dare I call him mine?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution: he, the King,
Call'd me polluted: shall I kill myself?
What help in that? I cannot kill my sin,
If soul be soul; nor can I kill my shame;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and make the years,
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of scorn.
I must not dwell on that defeat of fame.
Let the world be; that is but of the world
What else? what hope? I think there was a hope,
Except he mock'd me when he spake of hope;
His hope he call'd it; but he never mocks,
For mockery is the fume of little hearts.
And blessed be the King, who hath forgiven
My wickedness to him, and let me hope
That in mine own heart I can live down sin
And be his mate hereafter in the heavens
Before high God. Ah great and gentle lord,
Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint
Among his warring senses, to thy knights—
To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took
Full easily all impressions from below,
Would not look up, or half-despised the height
To which I would not or I could not climb—
I thought I could not breathe in that fine air,
That pure severity of perfect light—
I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found
In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,
Thou art the highest and most human too,
Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none
Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?
Now—ere he goes to the great Battle? none:
Myself must tell him in that purer life,
But now it were too daring. Ah my God,
What might I not have made of thy fair world,
Had I but loved thy highest creature here?
It was my duty to have loved the highest:
It surely was my profit had I known:
It would have been my pleasure had I seen.
We needs must love the highest when we see it,
Not Lancelot, nor another."

Here her hand
Grasp'd, made her vail her eyes: she look'd and saw

The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,
"Yea, little maid, for am *I* not forgiven?"
Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns
All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed
Within her, and she wept with these and said,

"Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke
The vast design and purpose of the King.
O shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,
Meek maidens, from the voices crying 'shame.'
I must not scorn myself: he loves me still.
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.
So let me, if you do not shudder at me,
Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you;
Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,
Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;
Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,
But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;
Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;
Do each low office of your holy house;
Walk your dim cloister, and distribute dole
To poor sick people, richer in His eyes
Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I;
And treat their loathsome hurts and heal mine own;
And so wear out in almsdeed and in prayer
The sombre close of that voluptuous day,
Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King."

She said: they took her to themselves; and she,
Still hoping, fearing, "is it yet too late?"
Dwelt with them, till in time their Abbess died.
Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,
And for the power of ministration in her,
And likewise for the high rank she had borne,
Was chosen Abbess, there, an Abbess, lived
For three brief years, and there, an Abbess, past
To where beyond these voices there is peace.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

SOHRAB AND RUSTUM

AN EPISODE

And the first gray of morning fill'd the east,
And the fog rose out of the Oxus stream.
But all the Tartar camp along the stream
Was hush'd, and still the men were plunged in sleep;
Sohrab alone, he slept not; all night long
He had lain wakeful, tossing on his bed;
But when the grey dawn stole into his tent,
He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's cloak, and left his tent,
And went abroad into the cold wet fog,
Through the dim camp to Peran-Wisa's tent.
Through the black Tartar tents he pass'd, which stood
Clustering like bee-hives on the low flat strand
Of Oxus, where the summer-floods o'erflow
When the sun melts the snows in high Pamere;

Through the black tents he pass'd, o'er that low strand,
And to a hillock came, a little back
From the stream's brink—the spot where first a boat,
Crossing the stream in summer, scrapes the land.
The men of former times had crown'd the top
With a clay fort; but that was fall'n, and now
The Tartars built there Peran-Wisa's tent,
A dome of laths, and o'er it felts were spread.
And Sohrab came there, and went in, and stood
Upon the thick-piled carpets in the tent,
And found the old man sleeping on his bed
Of rugs and felts, and near him lay his arms.
And Peran-Wisa heard him, though the step
Was dull'd; for he slept light, an old man's sleep;
And he rose quickly on one arm, and said:—
"Who art thou? for it is not yet clear dawn.
Speak! is there news, or any night alarm?"
But Sohrab came to the bedside, and said:—
"Thou know'st me, Peran-Wisa! it is I.
The sun is not yet risen, and the foe
Sleep; but I sleep not; all night long I lie
Tossing and wakeful; and I come to thee.
For so did King Afrasiab bid me seek
Thy counsel, and to heed thee as thy son,
In Samarcand, before the army march'd;
And I will tell thee what my heart desires.
Thou know'st if, since from Ader-baijan first
I came among the Tartars and bore arms,
I have still served Afrasiab well, and shown,
At my boy's years, the courage of a man.
This too thou know'st, that while I still bear on
The conquering Tartar ensigns through the world,
And beat the Persians back on every field,
I seek one man, one man, and one alone:
Rustum, my father; who I hoped should greet,
Should one day greet, upon some well-fought field,
His not unworthy, not inglorious son.
So I long hoped, but him I never find.
Come then, hear now, and grant me what I ask.
Let the two armies rest to-day: but I
Will challenge forth the bravest Persian lords
To met me, man to man; if I prevail,
Rustum will surely hear it: if I fall—
Old man, the dead need no one, claim no kin.
Dim is the rumor of a common fight,
Where host meets host, and many names are sunk;
But of a single combat fame speaks clear."
He spoke; and Peran-Wisa took the hand
Of the young man in his, and sigh'd, and said:—
"O Sohrab, an unquiet heart is thine!
Canst thou not rest among the Tartar chiefs,
And share the battle's common chance with us
Who love thee, but must press forever first,
In single fight incurring single risk,
To find a father thou hast never seen?
That were far best, my son, to stay with us
Unmurmuring; in our tents, while it is war,

And when 'tis truce, then in Afrasiab's towns.
But, if this one desire indeed rules all,
To seek out Rustum—seek him not through fight!
Seek him in peace, and carry to his arms,
O Sohrab, carry an unwounded son!
But far hence seek him, for he is not here.
For now it is not as when I was young,
When Rustum was in front of every fray;
But now he keeps apart, and sits at home,
In Seïstan, with Zal, his father old,
Whether that his own mighty strength at last
Feels the abhorr'd approaches of old age,
Or in some quarrel with the Persian King.
There go!—Thou wilt not? Yet my heart forebodes
Danger or death awaits thee on this field.
Fain would I know thee safe and well, though lost
To us; fain therefore send thee hence, in peace
To seek thy father, not seek single fights
In vain;—but who can keep the lion's cub
From ravening, and who govern Rustum's son?
Go, I will grant thee what thy heart desires."
So said he, and dropp'd Sohrab's hand, and left
His bed, and the warm rugs whereon he lay;
And o'er his chilly limbs his woollen coat
He pass'd, and tied his sandals on his feet,
And threw a white cloak round him, and he took
In his right hand a ruler's staff, no sword;
And on his head he set his sheep-skin cap,
Black, glossy, curl'd, the fleece of Kara-Kul;
And raised the curtain of his tent, and call'd
His herald to his side, and went abroad.
The sun by this had risen, and clear'd the fog
From the broad Oxus and the glittering sands.
And from their tents the Tartar horsemen filed
Into the open plain; so Haman bade—
Haman, who next to Peran-Wisa ruled
The host, and still was in his lusty prime.
From their black tents, long files of horse, they stream'd;
As when some gray November morn the files,
In marching order spread, of long-neck'd cranes
Stream over Casbin and the southern slopes
Of Elburz, from the Aralian estuaries,
Or some frore[1] Caspian reed-bed, southward bound
For the warm Persian sea-board—so they stream'd.
The Tartars of the Oxus, the King's guard,
First, with black sheep-skin caps and with long spears;
Large men, large steeds; who from Bokhara come
And Khiva, and ferment the milk of mares.
Next, the more temperate Toorkmuns of the south,
The Tukas, and the lances of Salore,
And those from Attruck and the Caspian sands;
Light men and on light steeds, who only drink
The acrid milk of camels, and their wells.
And then a swarm of wandering horse, who came
From far, and a more doubtful service own'd;
The Tartars of Ferghana, from the banks
Of the Jaxartes, men with scanty beards

[1] frozen

And close-set skull-caps; and those wilder hordes
Who roam o'er Kipchak and the northern waste;
Kalmucks and unkempt Kuzzaks, tribes who stray
Nearest the Pole, and wandering Kirghizzes,
Who come on shaggy ponies from Pamere;
These all fil'd out from camp into the plain.
And on the other side the Persians form'd;—
First a light cloud of horse, Tartars they seem'd,
The Ilyats of Khorassan; and behind,
The royal troops of Persia, horse and foot,
Marshall'd battalions bright in burnish'd steel.
But Peran-Wisa with his herald came,
Threading the Tartar squadrons to the front,
And with his staff kept back the foremost ranks.
And when Ferood, who led the Persians, saw
That Peran-Wisa kept the Tartars back,
He took his spear, and to the front he came,
And check'd his ranks, and fix'd them where they stood.
And the old Tartar came upon the sand
Betwixt the silent hosts, and spake, and said:—
"Ferood, and ye, Persians and Tartars, hear!
Let there be truce between the hosts to-day.
But choose a champion from the Persian lords
To fight our champion Sohrab, man to man."
As, in the country, on a morn in June,
When the dew glistens on the pearled ears,
A shiver runs through the deep corn for joy—
So, when they heard what Peran-Wisa said,
A thrill through all the Tartar squadrons ran
Of pride and hope for Sohrab, whom they loved.
But as a troop of pedlars, from Cabool,
Cross underneath the Indian Caucasus,
That vast sky-neighboring mountain of milk snow;
Crossing so high, that, as they mount, they pass
Long flocks of traveling birds dead on the snow,
Choked by the air, and scarce can they themselves
Slake their parch'd throats with sugar'd mulberries—
In single file they move, and stop their breath,
For fear they should dislodge the o'er-hanging snows—
So the pale Persians held their breath with fear.
And to Ferood his brother chiefs came up
To counsel; Gudurz and Zoarrah came,
And Feraburz, who ruled the Persian host
Second, and was the uncle of the King;
These came and counsell'd, and then Gudurz said:—
"Ferood, shame bids us take their challenge up,
Yet champion have we none to match this youth.
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart.
But Rustum came last night; aloof he sits
And sullen, and has pitch'd his tents apart.
Him will I seek, and carry to his ear
The Tartar challenge, and this young man's name:
Haply he will forget his wrath, and fight

Stand forth the while, and take their challenge up."
So spake he; and Ferood stood forth and cried:—
"Old man, be it agreed as thou hast said!
Let Sohrab arm, and we will find a man."
He spake: and Peran-Wisa turn'd, and strode
Back through the opening squadrons[1] to his tent.
But through the anxious Persians Gudurz ran,
And cross'd the camp which lay behind, and reach'd,
Out on the sands beyond it, Rustum's tents.
Of scarlet cloth they were, and glittering gay,
Just pitch'd; the high pavilion in the midst
Was Rustum's, and his men lay camp'd around.
And Gudurz enter'd Rustum's tent, and found
Rustum; his morning meal was done, but still
The table stood before him, charged with food—
A side of roasted sheep, and cakes of bread,
And dark green melons; and there Rustum sate
Listless, and held a falcon on his wrist,
And play'd with it; but Gudurz came and stood
Before him; and he look'd, and saw him stand,
And with a cry sprang up and dropp'd the bird,
And greeted Gudurz with both hands, and said:—
"Welcome! these eyes could see no better sight.
What news? but sit down first, and eat and drink."

But Gudurz stood in the tent-door, and said:—
"Not now! a time will come to eat and drink,
But not to-day: to-day has other needs.
The armies are drawn out, and stand at gaze;
For from the Tartars is a challenge brought
To pick a champion from the Persian lords
To fight their champion—and thou know'st his name—
Sohrab men call him, but his birth is hid.
O Rustum, like thy might is this young man's!
He has the wild stag's foot, the lion's heart;
And he is young, and Iran's[2] chiefs are old,
Or else too weak; and all eyes turn to thee.
Come down and help us, Rustum, or we lose!"
He spoke; but Rustum answer'd with a smile:—
"Go to! if Iran's chiefs are old, then I
Am older; if the young are weak, the King
Errs strangely; for the King, for Kai Khosroo,
Himself is young, and honors younger men,
And lets the aged moulder to their graves.
Rustum he loves no more, but loves the young—
The young may rise at Sohrab's vaunts, not I.
For what care I, though all speak Sohrab's fame?
For would that I myself had such a son,
And not that one slight helpless girl I have—
A son so famed, so brave, to send to war,
And I to tarry with the snow-hair'd Zal,
My father, whom the robber Afghans vex,

[1] troops drawn up in a square

[2] Persia's

And clip his borders short, and drive his herds,
And he has none to guard his weak old age.
There would I go, and hang my armor up,
And with my great name fence that weak old man,
And spend the goodly treasures I have got,
And rest my age, and hear of Sohrab's fame,
And leave to death the hosts of thankless kings,
And with these slaughterous hands draw sword no more."
He spoke, and smiled; and Gudurz made reply:—
"What then, O Rustum, will men say to this,
When Sohrab dares our bravest forth, and seeks
Thee most of all, and thou, whom most he seeks,
Hidest thy face? Take heed lest men should say:
Like some old miser, Rustum hoards his fame,
And shuns to peril it with younger men."
And, greatly mov'd, then Rustum made reply:—
"O Gudurz, wherefore dost thou say such words?
Thou knowest better words than this to say.
What is one more, one less, obscure or famed,
Valiant or craven, young or old, to me?
Are not they mortal, am not I myself?
But who for men of nought would do great deeds?
Come, thou shalt see how Rustum hoards his fame!
But I will fight unknown, and in plain arms;
Let not men say of Rustum, he was match'd
In single fight with any mortal man."
He spoke, and frown'd; and Gudurz turn'd, and ran
Back quickly through the camp in fear and joy—
Fear at his wrath, but joy that Rustum came.
But Rustum strode to his tent-door, and call'd
His followers in, and bade them bring his arms,
And clad himself in steel; the arms he chose
Were plain, and on his shield was no device,
Only his helm was rich, inlaid with gold,
And, from the fluted spine atop, a plume
Of horsehair waved, a scarlet horsehair plume.
So arm'd, he issued forth; and Ruksh, his horse,
Follow'd him like a faithful hound, at heel—
Ruksh, whose renown was noised through all the earth,
The horse, whom Rustum on a foray once
Did in Bokhara by the river find
A colt beneath its dam, and drove him home,
And rear'd him: a bright bay, with lofty crest,
Dight with a saddle-cloth of broider'd green
Crusted with gold, and on the ground were work'd
All beasts of chase, all beasts which hunters know.
So follow'd, Rustum left his tents, and cross'd
The camp, and to the Persian host appear'd.
And all the Persians knew him, and with shouts
Hail'd; but the Tartars knew not who he was.
And dear as the wet diver to the eyes
Of his pale wife who waits and weeps on shore,

By sandy Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf,
Plunging all day in the blue waves, at night,
Having made up his tale of precious pearls,
Rejoins her in their hut upon the sands—
So dear, to the pale Persians Rustum came.
And Rustum to the Persian front advanc'd,
And Sohrab arm'd in Haman's tent, and came.
And as afield the reapers cut a swath
Down through the middle of a rich man's corn,
And on each side are squares of standing corn,
And in the midst a stubble, short and bare—
So on each side were squares of men, with spears
Bristling, and in the midst, the open sand.
And Rustum came upon the sand, and cast
His eyes toward the Tartar tents, and saw
Sohrab come forth, and eyed him as he came.
As some rich woman, on a winter's morn,
Eyes through her silken curtains the poor drudge
Who with numb blacken'd fingers makes her fire—
At cock-crow, on a starlit winter's morn,
When the frost flowers the whiten'd window-panes—
And wonders how she lives, and what the thoughts
Of that poor drudge may be; so Rustum eyed
The unknown adventurous youth, who from afar
Came seeking Rustum, and defying forth
All the most valiant chiefs; long he perused
His spirited air, and wonder'd who he was.
For very young he seem'd, tenderly rear'd;
Like some young cypress, tall, and dark, and straight,
Which in a queen's secluded garden throws
Its slight dark shadow on the moonlit turf,
By midnight, to a bubbling fountain's sound—
So slender Sohrab seem'd, so softly rear'd.
And a deep pity enter'd Rustum's soul
As he beheld him coming; and he stood,
And beckon'd to him with his hand, and said:—
"O thou young man, the air of Heaven is soft,
And warm, and pleasant; but the grave is cold!
Heaven's air is better than the cold dead grave.
Behold me! I am vast, and clad in iron,
And tried; and I have stood on many a field
Of blood, and I have fought with many a foe—
Never was that field lost, or that foe saved.
O Sohrab, wherefore wilt thou rush on death?
Be govern'd! quit the Tartar host, and come
To Iran, and be as my son to me,
And fight beneath my banner till I die!
There are no youths in Iran brave as thou."
So he spake, mildly; Sohrab heard his voice,
The mighty voice of Rustum, and he saw
His giant figure planted on the sand,
Sole, like some single tower, which a chief
Hath builded on the waste in former years
Against the robbers; and he saw that head,
Streak'd with its first gray hairs;—hope filled his soul,

And he ran forward and embraced his knees,
And clasp'd his hand within his own, and said:—
"Oh, by thy father's head! by thine own soul!
Art thou not Rustum? speak! art thou not he?"
But Rustum eyed askance the kneeling youth,
And turn'd away, and spake to his own soul:—
"Ah me, I muse what this young fox may mean!
False, wily, boastful, are these Tartar boys.
For if I now confess this thing he asks,
And hide it not, but say: *Rustum is here!*
He will not yield indeed, nor quit our foes,
But he will find some pretext not to fight,
And praise my fame, and proffer courteous gifts,
A belt or sword perhaps, and go his way,
And on a feast-tide, in Afrasiab's hall,
In Samarcand, he will arise and cry:
'I challeng'd once, when the two armies camp'd
Beside the Oxus, all the Persian lords
To cope with me in single fight; but they
Shrank, only Rustum dared: then he and I
Chang'd gifts, and went on equal terms away.'
So will he speak, perhaps, while men applaud;
Then were the chiefs of Iran shamed through me."
And then he turn'd, and sternly spake aloud:—
"Rise! wherefore dost thou vainly question thus
Of Rustum? I am here, whom thou hast call'd
By challenge forth; make good thy vaunt, or yield!
Is it with Rustum only thou wouldst fight?
Rash boy, men look on Rustum's face and flee!
For well I know, that did great Rustum stand
Before thy face this day, and were reveal'd,
There would be then no talk of fighting more.
But being what I am, I tell thee this—
Do thou record it in thine inmost soul:
Either thou shalt renounce thy vaunt and yield,
Or else thy bones shall strew this sand, till winds
Bleach them, or Oxus with his summer-floods,
Oxus in summer, wash them all away."
He spoke; and Sohrab answer'd, on his feet:—
"Art thou so fierce? Thou wilt not fright me so!
I am no girl, to be made pale by words.
Yet this thou hast said well, did Rustum stand
Here on this field, there were no fighting then.
But Rustum is far hence, and we stand here.
Begin! thou art more vast, more dread than I,
And thou art proved, I know, and I am young—
But yet success sways with the breath of Heaven.
And though thou thinkest that thou knowest sure
Thy victory, yet thou canst not surely know.
For we are all, like swimmers in the sea,
Pois'd on the top of a huge wave of fate,
Which hangs uncertain to which side to fall.
And whether it will heave us up to land,
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,

Back out to sea, to the deep waves of death,
We know not, and no search will make us know;
Only the event will teach us in its hour."
He spoke, and Rustum answer'd not, but hurl'd
His spear; down from the shoulder, down it came,
As on some partridge in the corn a hawk
That long has tower'd in the airy clouds,
Drops like a plummet; Sohrab saw it come,
And sprang aside, quick as a flash; the spear
Hiss'd, and went quivering down into the sand,
Which it sent flying wide;—then Sohrab threw
In turn, and full struck Rustum's shield; sharp rang,
The iron plates rang sharp, but turn'd the spear.
And Rustum seized his club, which none but he
Could wield; an unlopp'd trunk it was, and huge,
Still rough—like those which men in treeless plains
To build them boats fish from the flooded rivers,
Hyphasis or Hydaspes, when, high up
By their dark springs, the wind in winter-time
Hath made in Himalayan forests wrack,
And strewn the channels with torn boughs—so huge
The club which Rustum lifted now, and struck
One stroke; but again Sohrab sprang aside,
Lithe as the glancing snake, and the club came
Thundering to earth, and leapt from Rustum's hand.
And Rustum follow'd his own blow, and fell
To his knees, and with his fingers clutch'd the sand;
And now might Sohrab have unsheathed his sword,
And pierc'd the mighty Rustum while he lay
Dizzy, and on his knees, and choked with sand;
But he look'd on, and smiled, nor bared his sword,
But courteously drew back, and spoke, and said:—
"Thou strik'st too hard! that club of thine will float
Upon the summer-floods, and not my bones.
But rise, and be not wroth! not wroth am I;
No, when I see thee, wrath forsakes my soul.
Thou say'st, thou art not Rustum: be it so!
Who art thou then, that canst so touch my soul?
Boy as I am, I have seen battles too—
Have waded foremost in their bloody waves,
And heard their hollow roar of dying men;
But never was my heart thus touch'd before.
Are they from Heaven, these softenings of the heart?
O thou old warrior, let us yield to Heaven!
Come, plant we here in earth our angry spears,
And make a truce, and sit upon this sand,
And pledge each other in red wine, like friends,
And thou shalt talk to me of Rustum's deeds.
There are enough foes in the Persian host,
Whom I may meet, and strike, and feel no pang;
Champions enough Afrasiab has, whom thou

Mayst fight: fight *them,* when they confront thy spear!
But oh, let there be peace 'twixt thee and me!"
He ceas'd, but while he spake, Rustum had risen,
And stood erect, trembling with rage; his club
He left to lie, but had regain'd his spear,
Whose fiery point now in his mail'd right-hand
Blazed bright and baleful, like that autumn-star,
The baleful sign of fevers; dust had soil'd
His stately crest, and dimm'd his glittering arms.
His breast heaved, his lips foam'd, and twice his voice
Was choked with rage; at last these words broke way:—
"Girl! nimble with thy feet, not with thy hands!
Curl'd minion, dancer, coiner of sweet words!
Fight, let me hear thy hateful voice no more!
Thou art not in Afrasiab's gardens now
With Tartar girls, with whom thou art wont to dance;
But on the Oxus-sands, and in the dance
Of battle, and with me, who make no play
Of war; I fight it out, and hand to hand.
Speak not to me of truce, and pledge, and wine!
Remember all thy valor; try thy feints
And cunning! All the pity I had is gone;
Because thou hast shamed me, before both the hosts
With thy light skipping tricks, and thy girl's wiles."
He spoke, and Sohrab kindled at his taunts,
And he too drew his sword; at once they rush'd
Together, as two eagles on one prey
Come rushing down together from the clouds,
One from the east, one from the west; their shields
Dash'd with a clang together, and a din
Rose, such as that the sinewy woodcutters
Make often in the forest's heart at morn,
Of hewing axes, crashing trees—such blows
Rustum and Sohrab on each other hail'd.
And you would say that sun and stars took part
In that unnatural conflict; for a cloud
Grew suddenly in Heaven, and dark'd the sun
Over the fighters' heads; and a wind rose
Under their feet, and moaning swept the plain,
And in a sandy whirlwind wrapp'd the pair.
In gloom they twain were wrapp'd, and they alone;
For both the on-looking hosts on either hand
Stood in broad daylight, and the sky was pure,
And the sun sparkled on the Oxus stream.
But in the gloom they fought, with bloodshot eyes
And laboring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but fail'd to reach the skin,
And Rustum pluck'd it back with angry groan.
Then Sohrab with his sword smote Rustum's helm,
Nor clove its steel quite through; but all the crest
He shore away, and that proud horsehair plume,
Never till now defiled, sank to the dust;
And Rustum bow'd his head; but then the gloom
Grew blacker, thunder rumbled in the air,

And lightnings rent the cloud; and Ruksh, the horse,
Who stood at hand, utter'd a dreadful cry;—
No horse's cry was that, most like the roar
Of some pain'd desert-lion, who all day
Hath trail'd the hunter's javelin in his side,
And comes at night to die upon the sand.
The two hosts heard that cry, and quaked for fear,
And Oxus curdled as it cross'd his stream.
But Sohrab heard, and quail'd not, but rush'd on,
And struck again; and again Rustum bow'd
His head; but this time all the blade, like glass,
Sprang in a thousand shivers on the helm,
And in the hand the hilt remain'd alone.
Then Rustum raised his head; his dreadful eyes
Glared, and he shook on high his menacing spear,
And shouted: *Rustum!*—Sohrab heard that shout,
And shrank amazed; back he recoil'd one step,
And scann'd with blinking eyes the advancing form;
And then he stood bewilder'd; and he dropp'd
His covering shield, and the spear pierced his side.
He reel'd, and staggering back, sank to the ground;
And then the gloom dispersed, and the wind fell,
And the bright sun broke forth, and melted all
The cloud; and the two armies saw the pair—
Saw Rustum standing, safe upon his feet,
And Sohrab, wounded, on the bloody sand.

Then, with a bitter smile, Rustum began:—
"Sohrab, thou thoughtest in thy mind to kill
A Persian lord this day, and strip his corpse,
And bear thy trophies to Afrasiab's tent.
Or else that the great Rustum would come down
Himself to fight, and that thy wiles would move
His heart to take a gift, and let thee go.
And then that all the Tartar host would praise
Thy courage or thy craft, and spread thy fame,
To glad thy father in his weak old age.
Fool, thou art slain, and by an unknown man!
Dearer to the red jackals shalt thou be
Than to thy friends, and to thy father old."
And, with a fearless mien, Sohrab replied:—
"Unknown thou art; yet thy fierce vaunt is vain.
Thou dost not slay me, proud and boastful man!
No: Rustum slays me, and this filial heart.
For were I match'd with ten such men as thee,
And I were that which till to-day I was,
They should be lying here, I standing there.
But that belovèd name unnerved my arm—
That name, and something, I confess, in thee,
Which troubles all my heart, and made my shield
Fall; and thy spear transfix'd an unarm'd foe.
And now thou boastest, and insult'st my fate.
But hear thou this, fierce man, tremble to hear:

The mighty Rustum shall avenge my death!
My father, whom I seek through all the world!
He shall avenge my death, and punish thee!"
As when some hunter in the spring hath found
A breeding eagle sitting on her nest,
Upon the craggy isle of a hill-lake,
And pierc'd her with an arrow as she rose,
And follow'd her to find her where she fell
Far off;—anon her mate comes winging back
From hunting, and a great way off descries
His huddling young left sole; at that, he checks
His pinion, and with short uneasy sweeps
Circles above his eyry, with loud screams
Chiding his mate back to her nest; but she
Lies dying, with the arrow in her side,
In some far stony gorge out of his ken,
A heap of fluttering feathers—never more
Shall the lake glass her, flying over it;
Never the black and dripping precipices
Echo her stormy scream as she sails by—
As that poor bird flies home, nor knows his loss,
So Rustum knew not his own loss, but stood
Over his dying son, and knew him not.
But, with a cold incredulous voice, he said:—
"What prate is this of fathers and revenge?
The mighty Rustum never had a son."
And, with a failing voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Ah yes, he had! and that lost son am I.
Surely the news will one day reach his ear,
Reach Rustum, where he sits, and tarries long,
Somewhere, I know not where, but far from here;
And pierce him like a stab, and make him leap
To arms, and cry for vengeance upon thee.
Fierce man, bethink thee, for an only son!
What will that grief, what will that vengeance be?
Oh, could I live till I that grief had seen!
Yet him I pity not so much, but her,
My mother, who in Ader-baijan dwells
With that old king, her father, who grows gray
With age, and rules over the valiant Koords.
Her most I pity, who no more will see
Sohrab returning from the Tartar camp,
With spoils and honor, when the war is done.
But a dark rumor will be bruited up,
From tribe to tribe, until it reach her ear;
And then will that defenceless woman learn
That Sohrab will rejoice her sight no more,
But that in battle with a nameless foe,
By the far-distant Oxus, he is slain."
He spoke; and as he ceased, he wept aloud,
Thinking of her he left, and his own death.
He spoke; but Rustum listen'd, plunged in thought,
Nor did he yet believe it was his son
Who spoke, although he call'd back names he knew;
For he had had sure tidings that the babe,
Which was in Ader-baijan born to him,
Had been a puny girl, no boy at all—
So that sad mother sent him word, for fear
Rustum should seek the boy, to train in arms.
And so he deem'd that either Sohrab took,
By a false boast, the style of Rustum's son;

Or that men gave it him, to swell his fame.
So deem'd he; yet he listen'd, plunged in thought.
And his soul set to grief, as the vast tide
Of the bright rocking Ocean sets to shore
At the full moon; tears gather'd in his eyes;
For he remember'd his own early youth,
And all its bounding rapture; as, at dawn,
The shepherd from his mountain-lodge descries
A far, bright city, smitten by the sun,
Through many rolling clouds—so Rustum saw
His youth; saw Sohrab's mother, in her bloom,
And that old King, her father, who loved well
His wandering guest, and gave him his fair child
With joy; and all the pleasant life they led,
They three, in that long-distant summer-time—
The castle, and the dewy woods, and hunt
And hound, and morn on those delightful hills
In Ader-baijan. And he saw that Youth,
Of age and looks to be his own dear son,
Piteous and lovely, lying on the sand,
Like some rich hyacinth which by the scythe
Of an unskilful gardener has been cut,
Mowing the garden grass-plots near its bed,
And lies, a fragrant tower of purple bloom,
On the mown, dying grass—so Sohrab lay,
Lovely in death, upon the common sand.
And Rustum gazed on him with grief, and said:—
"O Sohrab, thou indeed art such a son
Whom Rustum, wert thou his, might well have loved.
Yet here thou errest, Sohrab, or else men
Have told thee false—thou art not Rustum's son,
For Rustum had no son; one child he had—
But one—a girl; who with her mother now
Plies some light female task, nor dreams of us—
Of us she dreams not, nor of wounds, nor war."
But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath; for now
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let the blood flow free, and so to die;—
But first he would convince his stubborn foe.
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
"Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine.
I tell thee, prick'd upon this arm I bear
That seal which Rustum to my mother gave,
That she might prick it on the babe she bore."
He spoke; and all the blood left Rustum's cheeks,
And his knees totter'd, and he smote his hand
Against his breast, his heavy mailed hand,
That the hard iron corslet clank'd aloud;
And to his heart he press'd the other hand,
And in a hollow voice he spake, and said:—
"Sohrab, that were a proof which could not lie!
If thou show this, then art thou Rustum's son."
Then, with weak hasty fingers, Sohrab loosed

His belt, and near the shoulder bared his arm,
And show'd a sign in faint vermilion points
Prick'd: as a cunning workman, in Pekin,
Pricks with vermilion some clear porcelain vase,
An emperor's gift—at early morn he paints,
And all day long; and, when night comes, the lamp
Lights up his studious forehead and thin hands—
So delicately prick'd the sign appear'd
On Sohrab's arm, the sign of Rustum's seal.
It was that griffin, which of old rear'd Zal,
Rustum's great father, whom they left to die,
A helpless babe, among the mountain-rocks;
Him that kind creature found, and rear'd, and lov'd—
Then Rustum took it for his glorious sign.
And Sohrab bared that image on his arm,
And himself scann'd it long with mournful eyes,
And then he touch'd it with his hand, and said:—
"How say'st thou? Is that sign the proper sign
Of Rustum's son, or of some other man's?"
He spoke; but Rustum gazed, and gazed, and stood
Speechless; and then he utter'd one sharp cry:
O boy—thy father!—and his voice choked there.
And then a dark cloud pass'd before his eyes,
And his head swam, and he sank down to earth.
But Sohrab crawl'd to where he lay, and cast
His arms about his neck, and kiss'd his lips,
And with fond faltering fingers stroked his cheeks
Trying to call him back to life; and life
Came back to Rustum: and he oped his eyes,
And they stood wide with horror; and he seized
In both his hands the dust which lay around,
And threw it on his head, and smirch'd his hair,
His hair, and face, and beard, and glittering arms;
And strong convulsive groanings shook his breast,
And his sobs choked him; and he clutch'd his sword,
To draw it, and forever let life out.
But Sohrab saw his thought, and held his hands,
And with a soothing voice he spake, and said:—
"Father, forbear! for I but meet to-day
The doom which at my birth was written down
In Heaven, and thou art Heaven's unconscious hand.
Surely my heart cried out that it was thou,
When first I saw thee; and thy heart spoke too,
I know it: but fate trod those promptings down
Under its iron heel; fate, fate engag'd
The strife, and hurl'd me on my father's spear.
But let us speak no more of this: I find
My father; let me feel that I have found!
Come, sit beside me on this sand, and take
My head betwixt thy hands, and kiss my cheeks,
And wash them with thy tears, and say: *My son!*

Quick! quick! for number'd are my sands of life,
And swift; for like the lightning to this field
I came, and like the wind I go away—
Sudden, and swift, and like a passing wind.
But it was writ in Heaven that this should be."
So said he, and his voice released the heart
Of Rustum, and his tears broke forth; he cast
His arms round his son's neck, and wept aloud,
And kiss'd him. And awe fell on both the hosts,
When they saw Rustum's grief; and Ruksh, the horse,
With his head bowing to the ground and mane
Sweeping the dust, came near, and in mute woe
First to the one, then to the other moved
His head, as if inquiring what their grief
Might mean; and from his dark compassionate eyes,
The big warm tears roll'd down, and caked the sand.
But Rustum chid him with stern voice, and said:—
"Ruksh, now thou grievest; but, O Ruksh, thy feet
Should first have rotted on their nimble joints,
Or ere they brought thy master to this field!"
But Sohrab look'd upon the horse and said;—
"Is this, then, Ruksh? How often, in past days,
My mother told me of thee, thou brave steed,
My terrible father's terrible horse! and said
That I should one day find thy lord and thee.
Come, let me lay my hand upon thy mane!
O Ruksh, thou art more fortunate than I;
For thou hast gone where I shall never go,
And snuff'd the breezes of my father's home.
And thou hast trod the sands of Seistan,
And seen the River of Helmund, and the Lake
Of Zirrah; and the aged Zal himself
Has often strok'd thy neck, and given thee food,
Corn in a golden platter soak'd with wine,
And said; *O Ruksh, bear Rustum well!*—but I
Have never known my grandsire's furrow'd face,
Nor seen his lofty house in Seistan,
Nor slaked my thirst at the clear Helmund stream;
But lodg'd among my father's foes, and seen
Afrasiab's cities only: Samarcand,
Bokhara, and lone Khiva in the waste,
And the black Toorkmun tents; and only drunk
The desert rivers: Moorghab and Tejend,
Kohik, and where the Kalmuks feed their sheep,
The northern Sir; and this great Oxus stream,
The yellow Oxus, by whose brink I die."
Then, with a heavy groan, Rustum bewail'd:—
"Oh, that its waves were flowing over me!
Oh, that I saw its grains of yellow silt
Roll tumbling in the current o'er my head!"
But, with a grave mild voice, Sohrab replied:—
"Desire not that, my father! thou must live,
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die.
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,

And reap a second glory in thine age:
Thou art my father, and thy gain is mine.
But come! thou seest this great host of men
Which follow me; I pray thee, slay not these!
Let me entreat for them; what have they done?
They follow'd me, my hope, my fame, my star.
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace.
But me thou must bear hence, not send with them,
But carry me with thee to Seistan,
And place me on a bed, and mourn for me,
Thou, and the snow-hair'd Zal, and all thy friends.
And thou must lay me in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above my bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all.
That so the passing horseman on the waste
May see my tomb a great way off, and cry:
Sohrab, the mighty Rustum's son, lies there,
Whom his great father did in ignorance kill!
And I be not forgotten in my grave."
And, with a mournful voice, Rustum replied:—
"Fear not! as thou hast said, Sohrab, my son,
So shall it be: for I will burn my tents,
And quit the host, and bear thee hence with me,
And carry thee away to Seistan,
And place thee on a bed, and mourn for thee,
With the snow-headed Zal, and all my friends.
And I will lay thee in that lovely earth,
And heap a stately mound above thy bones,
And plant a far-seen pillar over all,
And men shall not forget thee in thy grave.
And I will spare thy host; yea, let them go!
Let them all cross the Oxus back in peace!
What should I do with slaying any more?
For would that all that I have ever slain
Might be once more alive; my bitterest foes,
And they who were call'd champions in their time,
And through whose death I won that fame I have—
And I were nothing but a common man,
A poor, mean soldier, and without renown,
So thou mightest live too, my son, my son!
Or rather would that I, even I myself,
Might now be lying on this bloody sand,
Near death, and by an ignorant stroke of thine,
Not thou of mine! and I might die, not thou;
And I, not thou, be borne to Seistan;
And Zal might weep above my grave, not thine;
And say: *O son, I weep thee not too sore,*
For willingly, I know, thou met'st thine end!
But now in blood and battles was my youth,
And full of blood and battles is my age,
And I shall never end this life of blood."
Then, at the point of death, Sohrab replied:—
"A life of blood indeed, thou dreadful[1] man!
But thou shalt yet have peace; only not now,
Not yet! but thou shalt have it on that day,
When thou shalt sail in a high-masted ship,
Thou and the other peers of Kai Khosroo,

[1] dreaded

Returning home over the salt blue sea,
From laying thy dear master in his grave."
And Rustum gazed in Sohrab's face, and said:—
"Soon be that day, my son, and deep that sea!
Till then, if fate so wills, let me endure."
He spoke; and Sohrab smiled on him, and took
The spear, and drew it from his side, and eased
His wound's imperious anguish; but the blood
Came welling from the open gash, and life
Flow'd with the stream;—all down his cold white side
The crimson torrent ran, dim now and soil'd,
Like the soil'd tissue of white violets
Left, freshly gather'd, on their native bank,
By children whom their nurses call with haste
Indoors from the sun's eye; his head droop'd low,
His limbs grew slack; motionless, white, he lay—
White, with eyes closed; only when heavy gasps,
Deep heavy gasps quivering through all his frame,
Convulsed him back to life, he open'd them,
And fix'd them feebly on his father's face;
Till now all strength was ebb'd: and from his limbs
Unwillingly the spirit fled away,
Regretting the warm mansion which it left,
And youth, and bloom, and this delightful world.
So, on the bloody sand, Sohrab lay dead;
And the great Rustum drew his horseman's cloak
Down o'er his face, and sate by his dead son.
As those black granite pillars, once high-rear'd
By Jemshid in Persepolis,[1] to bear
His house, now 'mid their broken flights of steps
Lie prone, enormous, down the mountain side—
So, in the sand lay Rustum by his son.
And night came down over the solemn waste,
And the two gazing hosts, and that sole pair,
And darken'd all; and a cold fog, with night,
Crept from the Oxus. Soon a hum arose,
As of a great assembly loosed, and fires
Began to twinkle through the fog; for now
Both armies moved to camp, and took their meal;
The Persians took it on the open sands
Southward, the Tartars by the river marge;
And Rustum and his son were left alone.
But the majestic river floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste,
Under the solitary moon;— he flow'd
Right for the polar star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming, and bright, and large; then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents, that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain-cradle in Pamere,

[1] Capital city of Ancient Persia.

A foil'd circuitous wanderer—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed[1] stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral Sea.

WILLIAM MORRIS (1834–1896)

TWO RED ROSES ACROSS THE MOON

There was a lady lived in a hall,
Large of her eyes, and slim and tall;
And ever she sung from noon to noon,
Two red roses across the moon.

There was a knight came riding by
In early spring, when the roads were dry;
And he heard that lady sing at the noon,
Two red roses across the moon.

Yet none the more he stopp'd at all,
But he rode a-gallop past the hall;
And left that lady singing at noon,
Two red roses across the moon.

Because, forsooth, the battle was set,
And the scarlet and blue had got to be met,
He rode on the spur till the next warm noon:—
Two red roses across the moon.

But the battle was scatter'd from hill to hill,
From the windmill to the watermill;
And he said to himself, as it near'd the noon,
Two red roses across the moon.

You scarce could see for the scarlet and blue,
A golden helm or a golden shoe;
So he cried, as the fight grew thick at the noon,
Two red roses across the moon!

Verily then the gold bore through
The huddled spears of the scarlet and blue;
And they cried, as they cut them down at the noon,
Two red roses across the moon!

I trow he stopp'd when he rode again
By the hall, though draggled sore with the rain;
And his lips were pinch'd to kiss at the noon
Two red roses across the moon.

Under the may she stoop'd to the crown,
All was gold, there was nothing of brown;
And the horns blew up in the hall at noon,
Two red roses across the moon.

THE SAILING OF THE SWORD

Across the empty garden-beds,
When the Sword went out to sea,
I scarcely saw my sisters' heads
Bowed each beside a tree.
I could not see the castle leads,
When the Sword went out to sea.

Alicia wore a scarlet gown,
When the Sword went out to sea,
But Ursula's was russet brown:
For the mist we could not see
The scarlet roofs of the good town,
When the Sword went out to sea.

Green holly in Alicia's hand,
When the Sword went out to sea,
With sere oak-leaves did Ursula stand;
O! yet alas for me!
I did but bear a peel'd white wand,
When the Sword went out to sea.

[1] rising

O, russet brown and scarlet bright,
When the Sword went out to sea,
My sisters wore; I wore but white:
Red, brown, and white, are three;
Three damozels; each had a knight,
When the Sword went out to sea.

Sir Robert shouted loud, and said:
When the Sword went out to sea,
"Alicia, while I see thy head,
What shall I bring for thee?"
"O, my sweet lord, a ruby red:"
The Sword went out to sea.

Sir Miles said, while the sails hung down,
When the Sword went out to sea,
"O, Ursula! while I see the town,
What shall I bring for thee?"
"Dear knight, bring back a falcon brown:"
The Sword went out to sea.

But my Roland, no word he said
When the Sword went out to sea,
But only turn'd away his head,—
A quick shriek came from me:
"Come back, dear lord, to your white maid."
The Sword went out to sea.

The hot sun bit the garden-beds
When the Sword came back from sea;
Beneath an apple-tree our heads
Stretched out toward the sea;
Gray gleam'd the thirsty castle-leads,
When the Sword came back from sea.

Lord Robert brought a ruby red,
When the Sword came back from sea;
He kissed Alicia on the head:
"I am come back to thee;
'Tis time, sweet love, that we were wed,
Now the Sword is back from sea!"

Sir Miles he bore a falcon brown,
When the Sword came back from sea;
His arms went round tall Ursula's gown:
"What joy, O love, but thee?
Let us be wed in the good town,
Now the Sword is back from sea!"

My heart grew sick, no more afraid,
When the Sword came back from sea;
Upon the deck a tall white maid
Sat on Lord Roland's knee;
His chin was press'd upon her head,
When the Sword came back from sea!

THE HAYSTACK IN THE FLOODS

Had she come all the way for this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain
That her own eyes might see him slain
Beside the haystack in the floods?

Along the dripping leafless woods,
The stirrup touching either shoe,
She rode astride as troopers do;
With kirtle kilted to her knee,
To which the mud splash'd wretchedly;
And the wet dripp'd from every tree
Upon her head and heavy hair,
And on her eyelids broad and fair;
The tears and rain ran down her face.
By fits and starts they rode apace,
And very often was his place
Far off from her; he had to ride
Ahead, to see what might betide
When the roads cross'd; and sometimes, when
There rose a murmuring from his men,
Had to turn back with promises;
Ah me! she had but little ease;
And often for pure doubt and dread
She sobb'd, made giddy in the head
By the swift riding; while, for cold,
Her slender fingers scarce could hold
The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
She felt the foot within her shoe
Against the stirrup: all for this,

To part at last without a kiss
Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they near'd that old soak'd hay,
They saw across the only way
That Judas, Godmar, and the three
Red running lions dismally
Grinn'd from his pennon, under which
In one straight line along the ditch,
They counted thirty heads.

So then,
While Robert turn'd round to his men,
She saw at once the wretched end,
And, stooping down, tried hard to rend
Her coif the wrong way from her head,
And hid her eyes; while Robert said:
"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one,
At Poictiers where we made them run
So fast—why, sweet my love, good cheer.
The Gascon frontier is so near,
Nought after this."

But, "O," she said,
"My God! my God! I have to tread
The long way back without you; then
The court at Paris; those six men;
The gratings of the Chatelet;
The swift Seine on some rainy day
Like this, and people standing by
And laughing, while my weak hands try
To recollect how strong men swim.
All this, or else a life with him,
For which I should be damned at last.
Would God that this next hour were
past!"

He answer'd not, but cried his cry,
"St. George for Marny!" cheerily;
And laid his hand upon her rein.
Alas! no man of all his train
Gave back that cheery cry again;
And, while for rage his thumb beat
fast
Upon his sword-hilts, some one cast
About his neck a kerchief long,
And bound him.

Then they went along
To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
Your lover's life is on the wane
So fast, that, if this very hour
You yield not as my paramour,
He will not see the rain leave off—
Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and
scoff,
Sir Robert, or I slay you now."

She laid her hand upon her brow,
Then gazed upon the palm, as though
She thought her forehead bled, and—
"No!"
She said, and turn'd her head away,
As there was nothing else to say,
And everything was settled: red
Grew Godmar's face from chin to head:
"Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
My castle, guarding well my lands:
What hinders me from taking you,
And doing that I list to do
To your fair wilful body, while
Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile
Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
A long way out she thrust her chin:
"You know that I should strangle you
While you were sleeping; or bite through
Your throat, by God's help—ah!" she
said,
"Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
For in such wise they hem me in,
I cannot choose but sin and sin,
Whatever happens: yet I think
They could not make me eat or drink,
And so should I just reach my rest."
"Nay, if you do not my behest,
O Jehane! though I love you well,"
Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
All that I know." "Foul lies," she said.
"Eh? lies my Jehane? by God's head,
At Paris folks would deem them true!
Do you know, Jehane, they cry for you:
'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
Give us Jehane to burn or drown!'—

Eh—gag me Robert!—sweet my friend,
This were indeed a piteous end
For those long fingers, and long feet,
And long neck, and smooth shoulders sweet;
An end that few men would forget
That saw it—So, an hour yet:
Consider, Jehane, which to take
Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,
Dismounting, did she leave that place,
And totter some yards: with her face
Turn'd upward to the sky she lay,
Her head on a wet heap of hay,
And fell asleep: and while she slept,
And did not dream, the minutes crept
Round to the twelve again; but she,
Being waked at last, sigh'd quietly,
And strangely childlike came, and said:
"I will not." Straightway Godmar's head,
As though it hung on strong wires, turn'd
Most sharply round, and his face burn'd.

For Robert—both his eyes were dry,
He could not weep, but gloomily
He seem'd to watch the rain; yea, too,
His lips were firm; he tried once more
To touch her lips; she reach'd out, sore
And vain desire so tortured them,
The poor grey lips, and now the hem
Of his sleeve brush'd them.

With a start
Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart;
From Robert's throat he loosed the bands
Of silk and mail; with empty hands
Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw
The long bright blade without a flaw
Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand
In Robert's hair; she saw him bend
Back Robert's head; she saw him send
The thin steel down; the blow told well,
Right backward the knight Robert fell,
And moaned as dogs do, being half dead,
Unwitting, as I deem: so then
Godmar turn'd grinning to his men,
Who ran, some five or six, and beat
His head to pieces at their feet.

Then Godmar turn'd again and said:
"So, Jehane, the first fitte is read!
Take note, my lady, that your way
Lies backward to the Chatelet!"
She shook her head and gazed awhile
At her cold hands with a rueful smile,
As though this thing had made her mad.

This was the parting that they had
Beside the haystack in the floods.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI
(1828–1882)

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

Herseemed she scarce had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers;
Albeit, to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

(To one, it is ten years of years.
. . . Yet now, and in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me—her hair
Fell all about my face . . .
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house
That she was standing on;
By God built over the sheer depth
The which is Space begun;
So high, that looking downward thence
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in Heaven, across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

Around her, lovers, newly met
'Mid deathless love's acclaims,
Spoke evermore among themselves
Their heart-remembered names;
And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed herself and stooped
Out of the circling charm;
Until her bosom must have made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of Heaven she saw
Time like a pulse shake fierce
Through all the world. Her gaze still strove
Within the gulf to pierce
Its path; and now she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon
Was like a little feather
Fluttering far down the gulf; and now
She spoke through the still weather.
Her voice was like the voice the stars
Had when they sang together.

(Ah sweet! Even now, in that bird's song,
Strove not her accents there,
Fain to be hearkened? When those bells
Possessed the mid-day air,
Strove not her steps to reach my side
Down all the echoing stair?)

"I wish that he were come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in Heaven?—on earth,
Lord, Lord, has he not pray'd?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

"When round his head the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand and go with him
To the deep wells of light;
As unto a stream we will step down,
And bathe there in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps are stirred continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And see our old prayers, granted, melt
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie i' the shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Is sometimes felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes touch
Saith His Name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,
I myself, lying so,
The songs I sing here; which his voice
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
And find some knowledge at each pause,
Or some new thing to know."

(Alas! We two, we two, thou say'st!
Yea, one wast thou with me
That once of old. But shall God lift
To endless unity
The soul whose likeness with thy soul
Was but its love for thee?)

"We two," she said, "will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies,
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks
And foreheads garlanded;
Into the fine cloth white like flame
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb:
Then will I lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel, the clear-ranged unnumbered heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And angels meeting us shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
Only to live as once on earth
With Love, only to be,
As then awhile, forever now
Together, I and he."

She gazed and listened and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild,—
"All this is when he comes." She ceased,
The light thrilled towards her, fill'd
With angels in strong level flight.
Her eyes prayed, and she smil'd.

(I saw her smile.) But soon their path
Was vague in distant spheres:
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

THE FORMAL ESSAY: CARLYLE, RUSKIN, ARNOLD, PATER

THE two outstanding features of the nineteenth century are the growth of democracy and the development of science. Both brought in their train a series of far-reaching consequences which left distinct marks on the literature of the period.

The scientific point of view made it natural to explain all history as the result of an evolution, the result of an interplay of forces greater than individuals or their governments. The rise of the lower classes to economic and political power was the consequence of such an evolution, and the trust in the judgment of the majority was partly due to the belief that through the group mind, voiced at the polls and in popular opinion, natural laws found their expression. Such a view did not go unchallenged. It was the belief of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) that civilization progressed through the work of its great men, and that it was the duty of the rest of mankind to follow these great leaders of whose accomplishments they enjoyed the benefits. *Heroes and Hero-Worship* is his presentation of this conviction.

The developments of science likewise changed in a large measure men's interests and ideals. The telegraph, the railway, and the steamboat greatly lessened the separation of town and country, the isolation of districts and nations, and made possible the tremendous expansion of commerce and industry. The acquiring of wealth became increasingly the chief ambition of many men, and civilization was in danger of becoming predominantly materialistic. Economic theory tended to build up its system of society on the basis of material wealth, ignoring the spiritual factors that enter into life. Against this one-sided view John Ruskin (1819-1900) protests in *The Roots of Honor.*

The tendency of democracy and of science is generally towards the practical. The preoccupation of the scientist with his own subject, and his habit of dealing with exact fact and demonstrable truth, sometimes leave undeveloped his power of appreciating and enjoying imaginative literature. *Literature and Science* by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) is a vigorous defense of literature against those whose narrow views denied it its proper place in the life of educated men.

Pater's *Postscript* to the volume called *Appreciations* is less intimately related to the changes that were taking place in the world of affairs. Leading a retired life, and seeking his pleasure in the refined enjoyment of education and art, Walter Pater (1839-1894) wrote for a narrower circle than did the other men included in this group. The present essay, however, is a very suggestive discussion of an important topic in literary criticism, the distinction between the terms *romantic* and *classic,* and is an excellent illustration of critical analysis.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795–1881)

HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP

LECTURE III

THE HERO AS POET. DANTE; SHAKESPEARE

[Tuesday, 12th May, 1840.]

THE Hero as Divinity, the Hero as Prophet, are productions of old ages; not to be repeated in the new. They presuppose a certain rudeness of conception, which the progress of mere scientific knowledge puts an end to. There needs to be, as it were, a world vacant, or almost vacant of scientific forms, if men in their loving wonder are to fancy their fellow-man either a god or one speaking with the voice of a god. Divinity and Prophet are past. We are now to see our Hero in the less ambitious, but also less questionable, character of Poet; a character which does not pass. The Poet is a heroic figure belonging to all ages; whom all ages possess, when once he is produced, whom the newest age as the oldest may produce;—and will produce, always when Nature pleases. Let Nature send a Hero-soul; in no age is it other than possible that he may be shaped into a Poet.

Hero, Prophet, Poet,—many different names, in different times and places, do we give to Great Men; according to varieties we note in them, according to the sphere in which they have displayed themselves! We might give many more names, on this same principle. I will remark again, however, as a fact not unimportant to be understood, that the different *sphere* constitutes the grand origin of such distinction; that the Hero can be Poet, Prophet, King, Priest or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into. I confess, I have no notion of a truly great man that could not be *all* sorts of men. The Poet who could merely sit on a chair, and compose stanzas, would never make a stanza worth much. He could not sing the Heroic warrior, unless he himself were at least a Heroic warrior too. I fancy there is in him the Politician, the Thinker, Legislator, Philosopher;—in one or the other degree, he could have been, he is all these. So too I cannot understand how a Mirabeau, with that great glowing heart, with the fire that was in it, with the bursting tears that were in it, could not have written verses, tragedies, poems, and touched all hearts in that way, had his course of life and education led him thitherward. The grand fundamental character is that of Great Man; that the man be great. Napoleon has words in him which are like Austerlitz Battles.[1] Louis Fourteenth's Marshals are a kind of poetical men withal; the things Turenne[2] says are full of sagacity and geniality, like sayings of Samuel Johnson. The great heart, the clear deep-seeing eye: there it lies; no man whatever, in what province soever, can prosper at all without these. Petrarch and Boccaccio did diplomatic messages, it seems, quite well: one can easily believe it; they had done things a little harder than these! Burns, a gifted song-writer, might have made a still better Mirabeau.[3] Shakespeare,—one knows not what *he* could not have made, in the supreme degree.

True, there are aptitudes of Nature too. Nature does not make all great men, more than all other men, in the self-same mould. Varieties of aptitude doubtless; but infinitely more of circumstance; and far oftenest it is the *latter* only that are looked to. But it is as with common men in the learning of trades. You take any

[1] The Battle of Austerlitz (1805), in which Napoleon defeated the Austrians and Russians.

[2] 1611-1675

[3] 1749-1791. Great orator and leader in the French Revolution.

man, as yet a vague capability of a man, who could be any kind of craftsman; and make him into a smith, a carpenter, a mason: he is then and thenceforth that and nothing else. And if, as Addison complains, you sometimes see a street-porter staggering under his load on spindle-shanks, and near at hand a tailor with the frame of a Samson handling a bit of cloth and small Whitechapel needle, —it cannot be considered that aptitude of Nature alone has been consulted here either!—The Great Man also, to what shall he be bound apprentice? Given your Hero, is he to become Conqueror, King, Philosopher, Poet? It is an inexplicably complex controversial-calculation between the world and him! He will read the world and its laws; the world with its laws will be there to read. What the world, on *this* matter, shall permit and bid is, as we said, the most important fact about the world.—

Poet and Prophet differ greatly in our loose modern notions of them. In some old languages, again, the titles are synonymous; *Vates* means both Prophet and Poet: and indeed at all times, Prophet and Poet, well understood, have much kindred of meaning. Fundamentally indeed they are still the same; in this most important respect especially, That they have penetrated both of them into the sacred mystery of the Universe; what Goethe calls "the open secret." "Which is the great secret?" asks one.—"The *open* secret,"—open to all, seen by almost none! That divine mystery, which lies everywhere in all Beings, 'the Divine Idea of the World, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance,' as Fichte [1] styles it; of which all Appearance, from the starry sky to the grass of the field, but especially the Appearance of Man and his work, is but the *vesture*, the embodiment that renders it visible. This divine mystery *is* in all times and in all places; veritably is. In most times and places it is greatly overlooked; and the Universe, definable always in one or the other dialect, as the realized Thought of God, is considered a trivial, inert, commonplace matter,—as if, says the Satirist,[2] it were a dead thing, which some upholsterer had put together! It could do no good, at present, to *speak* much about this; but it is a pity for every one of us if we do not know it, live ever in the knowledge of it. Really a most mournful pity;—a failure to live at all, if we live otherwise!

But now, I say, whoever may forget this divine mystery, the *Vates*, whether Prophet or Poet, has penetrated into it; is a man sent hither to make it more impressively known to us. That always is his message; he is to reveal that to us,—that sacred mystery which he more than others lives ever present with. While others forget it, he knows it;—I might say, he has been driven to know it; without consent asked of *him*, he finds himself living in it, bound to live in it. Once more, here is no Hearsay, but a direct Insight and Belief; this man too could not help being a sincere man! Whosoever may live in the shows of things, it is for him a necessity of nature to live in the very fact of things. A man once more, in earnest with the Universe, though all others were but toying with it. He is a *Vates*, first of all, in virtue of being sincere. So far Poet and Prophet, participators in the "open secret," are one.

With respect to their distinction again: The *Vates* Prophet, we might say, has seized that sacred mystery rather on the moral side, as Good and Evil, Duty and Prohibition; the *Vates* Poet on what the Germans call the æsthetic side, as Beautiful, and the like. The one we may call a revealer of what we are to do, the other

[1] German philosopher (1762-1814).

[2] Carlyle.

of what we are to love. But indeed these two provinces run into one another, and cannot be disjoined. The Prophet too has his eye on what we are to love: how else shall he know what it is we are to do? The highest Voice ever heard on this earth said withal, "Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." A glance, that, into the deepest deep of Beauty. "The lilies of the field,"—dressed finer than earthly princes, springing-up there in the humble furrow-field; a beautiful *eye* looking-out on you, from the great inner Sea of Beauty! How could the rude Earth make these, if her Essence, rugged as she looks and is, were not inwardly Beauty? In this point of view, too, a saying of Goethe's, which has staggered several, may have meaning: "The Beautiful," he intimates, "is higher than the Good; the Beautiful includes in it the Good." The *true* Beautiful; which however, I have said somewhere, "differs from the *false* as Heaven does from Vauxhall!"[1] So much for the distinction and identity of Poet and Prophet.—

In ancient and also in modern periods we find a few Poets who are accounted perfect; whom it were a kind of treason to find fault with. This is noteworthy; this is right: yet in strictness it is only an illusion. At bottom, clearly enough, there is no perfect Poet! A vein of Poetry exists in the hearts of all men; no man is made altogether of Poetry. We are all poets when we *read* a poem well. The "imagination that shudders at the Hell of Dante," is not that the same faculty, weaker in degree, as Dante's own? No one but Shakespeare can embody, out of *Saxo Grammaticus,* the story of *Hamlet* as Shakespeare did: but every one models some kind of story out of it; every one embodies it better or worse. We need not spend time in defining. Where there is no specific difference, as between round and square, all definition must be more or less arbitrary. A man that has *so* much more of the poetic element developed in him as to have become noticeable, will be called Poet by his neighbors. World-Poets too, those whom we are to take for perfect Poets, are settled by critics in the same way. One who rises *so* far above the general level of Poets will, to such and such critics, seem a Universal Poet; as he ought to do. And yet it is, and must be, an arbitrary distinction. All Poets, all men, have some touches of the Universal; no man is wholly made of that. Most Poets are very soon forgotten: but not the noblest Shakespeare or Homer of them can be remembered *forever;*—a day comes when he too is not!

Nevertheless, you will say, there must be a difference between true Poetry and true Speech not poetical: what is the difference? On this point many things have been written, especially by late German Critics, some of which are not very intelligible at first. They say, for example, that the Poet has an *infinitude* in him; communicates an *Unendlichkeit,* a certain character of "infinitude," to whatsoever he delineates. This, though not very precise, yet on so vague a matter is worth remembering: if well meditated, some meaning will gradually be found in it. For my own part, I find considerable meaning in the old vulgar distinction of Poetry being *metrical,* having music in it, being a Song. Truly, if pressed to give a definition, one might say this as soon as anything else: If your delineation be authentically *musical,* musical not in word only, but in heart and substance, in all the thoughts and utterances of it, in the whole conception of it, then it will be poetical; if not, not.—Musical: how

[1] Vauxhall Gardens, a popular and fashionable resort on the Thames near London.

much lies in that! A *musical* thought is one spoken by a mind that has penetrated into the inmost heart of the thing; detected the inmost mystery of it, namely the *melody* that lies hidden in it; the inward harmony of coherence which is its soul, whereby it exists, and has a right to be, here in this world. All inmost things, we may say, are melodious; naturally utter themselves in Song. The meaning of Song goes deep. Who is there that, in logical words, can express the effect music has on us? A kind of inarticulate unfathomable speech, which leads us to the edge of the Infinite, and lets us for moments gaze into that!

Nay all speech, even the commonest speech, has something of song in it: not a parish in the world but has its parish-accent;—the rhythm or *tune* to which the people there *sing* what they have to say! Accent is a kind of chanting; all men have accent of their own,—though they only *notice* that of others. Observe too how all passionate language does of itself become musical,—with a finer music than the mere accent; the speech of a man even in zealous anger becomes a chant, a song. All deep things are Song. It seems somehow the very central essence of us, Song; as if all the rest were but wrappages and hulls! The primal element of us; of us, and of all things. The Greeks fabled of Sphere-Harmonies: it was the feeling they had of the inner structure of Nature; that the soul of all her voices and utterances was perfect music. Poetry, therefore, we will call *musical Thought*. The Poet is he who *thinks* in that manner. At bottom, it turns still on power of intellect; it is a man's sincerity and depth of vision that makes him a Poet. See deep enough, and you see musically; the heart of Nature *being* everywhere music, if you can only reach it.

The *Vates* Poet, with his melodious Apocalypse of Nature, seems to hold a poor rank among us, in comparison with the *Vates* Prophet; his function, and our esteem of him for his function, alike slight. The Hero taken as Divinity; the Hero taken as Prophet; then next the Hero taken only as Poet: does it not look as if our estimate of the Great Man, epoch after epoch, were continually diminishing? We take him first for a god, then for one god-inspired; and now in the next stage of it, his most miraculous word gains from us only the recognition that he is a Poet, beautiful verse-maker, man of genius, or suchlike!—It looks so; but I persuade myself that intrinsically it is not so. If we consider well, it will perhaps appear that in man still there is the *same* altogether peculiar admiration for the Heroic Gift, by what name soever called, that there at any time was.

I should say, if we do not now reckon a Great Man literally divine, it is that our notions of God, of the supreme unattainable Fountain of Splendor, Wisdom, and Heroism, are ever rising *higher;* not altogether that our reverence for these qualities, as manifested in our like, is getting lower. This is worth taking thought of. Sceptical Dilettantism, the curse of these ages, a curse which will not last forever, does indeed in this the highest province of human things, as in all provinces, make sad work; and our reverence for great men, all crippled, blinded, paralytic as it is, comes out in poor plight, hardly recognizable. Men worship the shows of great men; the most disbelieve that there is any reality of great men to worship. The dreariest, fatalest faith; believing which, one would literally despair of human things. Nevertheless look, for example, at Napoleon! A Corsican lieutenant of artillery; that is the show of *him:* yet is he not obeyed, *worshipped* after his sort, as all the Tiaraed and Diademed of the world put together could not be? High

Duchesses, and ostlers of inns, gather round the Scottish rustic, Burns;—a strange feeling dwelling in each that they never heard a man like this; that, on the whole, this is the man! In the secret heart of these people it still dimly reveals itself, though there is no accredited way of uttering it at present, that this rustic, with his black brows and flashing sun-eyes, and strange words moving laughter and tears, is of a dignity far beyond all others, incommensurable with all others. Do not we feel it so? But now, were Dilettantism, Scepticism, Triviality, and all that sorrowful brood, cast-out of us,—as, by God's blessing, they shall one day be; were faith in the shows of things entirely swept-out, replaced by clear faith in the *things,* so that a man acted on the impulse of that only, and counted the other non-extant; what a new livelier feeling towards this Burns were it!

Nay here in these ages, such as they are, have we not two mere Poets, if not deified, yet we may say beatified? Shakespeare and Dante are Saints of Poetry; really, if we will think of it, *canonized,* so that it is impiety to meddle with them. The unguided instinct of the world, working across all these perverse impediments, has arrived at such result. Dante and Shakespeare are a peculiar Two. They dwell apart, in a kind of royal solitude; none equal, none second to them: in the general feeling of the world, a certain transcendentalism, a glory as of complete perfection, invests these two. They *are* canonized, though no Pope or Cardinals took hand in doing it! Such, in spite of every perverting influence, in the most unheroic times, is still our indestructible reverence for heroism.—We will look a little at these Two, the Poet Dante and the Poet Shakespeare: what little it is permitted us to say here of the Hero as Poet will most fitly arrange itself in that fashion.

Many volumes have been written by way of commentary on Dante and his Book; yet, on the whole, with no great result. His Biography is, as it were, irrecoverably lost for us. An unimportant, wandering, sorrow-stricken man, not much note was taken of him while he lived; and the most of that has vanished, in the long space that now intervenes. It is five centuries since he ceased writing and living here. After all commentaries, the Book itself is mainly what we know of him. The Book;—and one might add that Portrait commonly attributed to Giotto,[1] which, looking on it, you cannot help inclining to think genuine, whoever did it. To me it is a most touching face; perhaps of all faces that I know, the most so. Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple laurel wound round it; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless;—significant of the whole history of Dante! I think it is the mournfulest face that ever was painted from reality; an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There is in it, as a foundation of it, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection as of a child; but all this is as if congealed into sharp contradiction, into abnegation, isolation, proud hopeless pain. A soft ethereal soul looking-out so stern, implacable, grim-trenchant, as from imprisonment of thick-ribbed ice! Withal it is a silent pain too, a silent scornful one: the lip is curled in a kind of godlike disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart,—as if it were withal a mean insignificant thing, as if he whom it had power to torture and strangle were greater than it. The face of one wholly in protest, and life-long unsurrendering battle, against the world. Affection all converted into indignation: an implacable indignation; slow, equable, silent, like that of a god! The eye too, it looks-out as in a kind of *surprise,* a

[1] Italian artist (1276-1337)

kind of inquiry, Why the world was of such a sort? This is Dante: so he looks, this "voice of ten silent centuries," and sings us "his mystic unfathomable song."

The little that we know of Dante's Life corresponds well enough with this Portrait and this Book. He was born at Florence, in the upper class of society, in the year 1265. His education was the best then going; much school-divinity, Aristotelean logic, some Latin classics,—no inconsiderable insight into certain provinces of things: and Dante, with his earnest intelligent nature, we need not doubt, learned better than most all that was learnable. He has a clear cultivated understanding, and of great subtlety; this best fruit of education he had contrived to realize from these scholastics. He knows accurately and well what lies close to him; but, in such a time, without printed books or free intercourse, he could not know well what was distant: the small clear light, most luminous for what is near, breaks itself into singular *chiaroscuro* striking on what is far off. This was Dante's learning from the schools. In life, he had gone through the usual destinies; been twice out campaigning as a soldier for the Florentine State, been on embassy; had in his thirty-fifth year, by natural gradation of talent and service, become one of the Chief Magistrates of Florence. He had met in boyhood a certain Beatrice Portinari, a beautiful little girl of his own age and rank, and grown-up thenceforth in partial sight of her, in some distant intercourse with her. All readers know his graceful affecting account of this; and then of their being parted; of her being wedded to another, and of her death soon after. She makes a great figure in Dante's Poem; seems to have made a great figure in his life. Of all beings it might seem as if she, held apart from him, far apart at last in the dim Eternity, were the only one he had ever with his whole strength of affection loved. She died: Dante himself was wedded; but it seems not happily, far from happily. I fancy, the rigorous earnest man, with his keen excitabilities, was not altogether easy to make happy.

We will not complain of Dante's miseries: had all gone right with him as he wished it, he might have been Prior,[1] Podestà, or whatsoever they call it, of Florence, well accepted among neighbors,—and the world had wanted one of the most notable words ever spoken or sung. Florence would have had another prosperous Lord Mayor; and the ten dumb centuries continued voiceless, and the ten other listening centuries (for there will be ten of them and more) had no *Divina Commedia* to hear! We will complain of nothing. A nobler destiny was appointed for this Dante; and he, struggling like a man led towards death and crucifixion, could not help fulfilling it. Give *him* the choice of his happiness! He knew not, more than we do, what was really happy, what was really miserable.

In Dante's Priorship, the Guelf-Ghibelline, Bianchi-Neri,[2] or some other confused disturbances rose to such a height, that Dante, whose party had seemed the stronger, was with his friends cast unexpectedly forth into banishment; doomed thenceforth to a life of woe and wandering. His property was all confiscated and more; he had the fiercest feeling that it was entirely unjust, nefarious in the sight of God and man. He tried what was in him to get reinstated; tried even by warlike surprisal, with arms in his hand: but it would not do; bad only had become worse. There is a record, I believe, still extant in the Florence Archives, dooming

[1] He *was* Prior two months in 1300, but not Podesta.

[2] The Guelphs and the Ghibellines were the two great rival parties in medieval Italy. The Bianchi (Whites) and the Neri (Blacks) were factions of the Guelph party. The Bianchi were defeated and banished in 1302.

this Dante, wheresoever caught, to be burnt alive. Burnt alive; so it stands, they say: a very curious civic document. Another curious document, some considerable number of years later, is a Letter of Dante's to the Florentine Magistrates, written in answer to a milder proposal of theirs, that he should return on condition of apologizing and paying a fine. He answers, with fixed stern pride: "If I cannot return without calling myself guilty, I will never return, *nunquam revertar*."

For Dante there was now no home in this world. He wandered from patron to patron, from place to place; proving, in his own bitter words, "How hard is the path, *Come è duro calle*."[1] The wretched are not cheerful company. Dante, poor and banished, with his proud earnest nature, with his moody humors, was not a man to conciliate men. Petrarch reports of him that being at Can della Scala's court, and blamed one day for his gloom and taciturnity, he answered in no courtier-like way. Della Scala[2] stood among his courtiers, with mimes and buffoons (*nebulones ac histriones*) making him heartily merry; when turning to Dante, he said: "Is it not strange, now, that this poor fool should make himself so entertaining; while you, a wise man, sit there day after day, and having nothing to amuse us with at all?" Dante answered bitterly: "No, not strange; your Highness is to recollect the Proverb, *Like to Like;*"—given the amuser, the amusee must also be given! Such a man, with his proud silent ways, with his sarcasms and sorrows, was not made to succeed at court. By degrees, it came to be evident to him that he had no longer any resting-place, or hope of benefit, in this earth. The earthly world had cast him forth, to wander, wander; no living heart to love him now; for his sore miseries there was no solace here.

The deeper naturally would the Eternal World impress itself on him; that awful reality over which, after all, this Time-world, with its Florences and banishments, only flutters as an unreal shadow. Florence thou shalt never see: but Hell and Purgatory and Heaven thou shalt surely see! What is Florence, Can della Scala, and the World and Life altogether? ETERNITY: thither, of a truth, not elsewhither, art thou and all things bound! The great soul of Dante, homeless on earth, made its home more and more in that awful other world. Naturally his thoughts brooded on that, as on the one fact important for him. Bodied or bodiless, it is the one fact important for all men:—but to Dante, in that age, it was bodied in fixed certainty of scientific shape; he no more doubted of that *Malebolge*[3] Pool, that it all lay there with its gloomy circles, with it *alti guai*,[4] and that he himself should see it, than we doubt that we should see Constantinople if we went thither. Dante's heart, long filled with this, brooding over it in speechless thought and awe, bursts forth at length into "mystic unfathomable song;" and this his *Divine Comedy*, the most remarkable of all modern Books, is the result.

It must have been a great solacement to Dante, and was, as we can see, a proud thought for him at times, That he, here in exile, could do this work; that no Florence, nor no man or men, could hinder him from doing it, or even much help him in doing it. He knew too,

[1] Thou shalt have proof how savoreth of salt
The bread of others, and how hard a road
The going down and up another's stairs.
Par. XVII, 58-60 (Longfellow's translation.)

[2] Ruler of Verona and Dante's patron.

[3] There is a place in Hell called Malebolge,
Wholly of stone and of an iron color,
As is the circle that around it turns.
Inf. XVIII, 1-3.

[4] Deep groans, heard by Dante within the gate of Hell:
There sighs, complaints, and ululations loud
Resounded through the air without a star,
Whence I, at the beginning, wept thereat.
Inf. III, 22-24.

partly, that it was great; the greatest a man could do. "If thou follow thy star, *Se tu segui tua stella,*" [1]—so could the Hero, in his forsakenness, in his extreme need, still say to himself: "Follow thou thy star, thou shalt not fail of a glorious haven!" The labor of writing, we find, and indeed could know otherwise, was great and painful for him; he says, This Book, "which has made me lean for many years." Ah yes, it was won, all of it, with pain and sore toil,—not in sport, but in grim earnest. His Book, as indeed most good Books are, has been written, in many senses, with his heart's blood. It is his whole history, this Book. He died after finishing it; not yet very old, at the age of fifty-six;—broken-hearted rather, as is said. He lies buried in his death-city Ravenna: *Hic claudor Dantes patriis extorris ab oris.* The Florentines begged back his body, in a century after; the Ravenna people would not give it. "Here am I Dante laid, shut-out from my native shores." [2]

I said, Dante's Poem was a Song: it is Tieck [3] who calls it "a mystic unfathomable Song;" and such is literally the character of it. Coleridge remarks very pertinently somewhere, that wherever you find a sentence musically worded, of true rhythm and melody in the words, there is something deep and good in the meaning too. For body and soul, word and idea, go strangely together here as everywhere. Song: we said before, it was the Heroic of Speech! All *old* Poems, Homer's and the rest, are authentically Songs. I would say, in strictness, that all right Poems are; that whatsoever is not *sung* is properly no Poem, but a piece of Prose cramped into jingling lines,—to the great injury of the grammar, to the great grief of the reader, for most part! What we want to get at is the *thought* the man had, if he had any: why should he twist it into jingle, if he *could* speak it out plainly? It is only when the heart of him is rapt into true passion of melody, and the very tones of him, according to Coleridge's remark, become musical by the greatness, depth and music of his thoughts, that we can give him right to rhyme and sing; that we call him a Poet, and listen to him as the Heroic of Speakers,—whose speech *is* Song. Pretenders to this are many; and to an earnest reader, I doubt, it is for most part a very melancholy, not to say an insupportable business, that of reading rhyme! Rhyme that had no inward necessity to be rhymed:—it ought to have told us plainly, without any jingle, what it was aiming at. I would advise all men who *can* speak their thought, not to sing it; to understand that, in a serious time, among serious men, there is no vocation in them for singing it. Precisely as we love the true song, and are charmed by it as by something divine, so shall we hate the false song, and account it a mere wooden noise, a thing hollow, superfluous, altogether an insincere and offensive thing.

I give Dante my highest praise when I say of his *Divine Comedy* that it is, in all senses, genuinely a Song. In the very sound of it there is a *canto fermo;* [4] it proceeds as by a chant. The language, his simple *terza rima,* [5] doubtless helped him in this. One reads along naturally with a sort of *lilt.* But I add, that it could not be otherwise; for the essence and material of the work are themselves rhythmic. Its depth, and rapt passion and sincerity, makes it musical;—go *deep* enough, there is music everywhere. A

[1] If thou thy star do follow,
Thou canst not fail thee of a glorious port,
If well I judged in the life beautiful.
Inf. xv, 55-57.

[2] Epitaph supposedly composed by Dante himself.

[3] German critic and poet (1773-1853).

[4] A form of chant.

[5] Three-line stanzas with alternate rime: aba, bcb, cdc, etc.

true inward symmetry, what one calls an architectural harmony, reigns in it, proportionates it all: architectural; which also partakes of the character of music. The three kingdoms, *Inferno, Purgatorio, Paradiso,* look-out on one another like compartments of a great edifice; a great supernatural world-cathedral, piled-up there, stern, solemn, awful; Dante's World of Souls! It is, at bottom, the *sincerest* of all Poems; sincerity, here too, we find to be the measure of worth. It came deep out of the author's heart of hearts; and it goes deep, and through long generations, into ours. The people of Verona, when they saw him on the streets, used to say, "*Eccovi l' uom ch' è stato all' Inferno,* See, there is the man that was in Hell!" Ah yes, he had been in Hell;—in Hell enough, in long severe sorrow and struggle; as the like of him is pretty sure to have been. Commedias that come-out *divine* are not accomplished otherwise. Thought, true labor of any kind, highest virtue itself, is it not the daughter of Pain? Born as out of the black whirlwind;—true *effort,* in fact, as of a captive struggling to free himself: that is Thought. In all ways we are "to become perfect through *suffering.*" [1]—But, as I say, no work known to me is so elaborated as this of Dante's. It has all been as if molten, in the hottest furnace of his soul. It had made him "lean" for many years. Not the general whole only; every compartment of it is worked-out, with intense earnestness, into truth, into clear visuality. Each answers to the other; each fits in its place, like a marble stone accurately hewn and polished. It is the soul of Dante, and in this the soul of the middle ages, rendered forever rhythmically visible there. No light task; a right intense one: but a task which is *done.*

Perhaps one would say, *intensity,* with the much that depends on it, is the prevailing character of Dante's genius. Dante does not come before us as a large catholic mind; rather a narrow, and even sectarian mind: it is partly the fruit of his age and position, but partly too of his own nature. His greatness has, in all senses, concentered itself into fiery emphasis and depth. He is world-great not because he is world-wide, but because he is world-deep. Through all objects he pierces as it were down into the heart of Being. I know nothing so intense as Dante. Consider, for example, to begin with the outermost development of his intensity, consider how he paints. He has a great power of vision; seizes the very type of a thing; presents that and nothing more. You remember that first view he gets of the Hall of Dite: [2] *red* pinnacle, redhot cone of iron glowing through the dim immensity of gloom;—so vivid, so distinct, visible at once and forever! It is as an emblem of the whole genius of Dante. There is a brevity, an abrupt precision in him: Tacitus [3] is not briefer, more condensed; and then in Dante it seems a natural condensation, spontaneous to the man. One smiting word; and then there is silence, nothing more said. His silence is more eloquent than words. It is strange with what a sharp decisive grace he snatches the true likeness of a matter: cuts into the matter as with a pen of fire. Plutus,[4] the blustering giant, collapses at Virgil's rebuke; [5] it is "as the sails sink, the mast being suddenly broken." Or that poor Brunetto Latini,[6] with the *cotto aspetto,* "face *baked,*" parched brown and lean; and the "fiery snow" that falls on them there, a

[1] *Hebrews,* ii, 10.

[2] The city of Dis:
Its mosques already, Master, clearly
Within there in the valley I discern
Vermilion, as if issuing from the fire
They were. *Inf.* VIII, 70-73.

[3] Latin historian, *c.* 55-117.

[4] The god of riches.

[5] *Inf.* VII, 8-15.

[6] Dante's teacher.

"fiery snow without wind," slow, deliberate, never-ending! Or the lids of those Tombs; square sarcophaguses, in that silent dim-burning Hall, each with its Soul in torment; the lids laid open there; they are to be shut at the Day of Judgment, through Eternity. And how Farinata rises; and how Cavalcante falls —at hearing of his Son, and the past tense *"fue"!* The very movements in Dante have something brief; swift, decisive, almost military. It is of the inmost essence of his genius, this sort of painting. The fiery, swift Italian nature of the man, so silent, passionate, with its quick abrupt movements, its silent "pale rages," speaks itself in these things.

For though this of painting is one of the outermost developments of a man, it comes like all else from the essential faculty of him; it is physiognomical of the whole man. Find a man whose words paint you a likeness, you have found a man worth something; mark his manner of doing it, as very characteristic of him. In the first place, he could not have discerned the object at all, or seen the vital type of it, unless he had, what we may call, *sympathized* with it,—had sympathy in him to bestow on objects. He must have been *sincere* about it too; sincere and sympathetic: a man without worth cannot give you the likeness of any object; he dwells in vague outwardness, fallacy and trivial hearsay, about all objects. And indeed may we not say that intellect altogether expresses itself in this power of discerning what an object is? Whatsoever of faculty a man's mind may have will come out here. Is it even of business, a matter to be done? The gifted man is he who *sees* the essential point, and leaves all the rest aside as surplusage: it is his faculty too, the man of business's faculty, that he discern the true *likeness,* not the false superficial one, of the thing he has got to work in. And how much of *morality* is in the kind of insight we get of anything; "the eye seeing in all things what it brought with it the faculty of seeing"! To the mean eye all things are trivial, as certainly as to the jaundiced they are yellow. Raphael, the Painters tell us, is the best of all Portrait-painters withal. No most gifted eye can exhaust the significance of any object. In the commonest human face there lies more than Raphael will take-away with him.

Dante's painting is not graphic only, brief, true, and of a vividness as of fire in dark night; taken on the wider scale, it is everyway noble, and the outcome of a great soul. Francesca and her Lover,[1] what qualities in that! A thing woven as out of rainbows, on a ground of eternal black. A small flute-voice of infinite wail speaks there, into our very heart of hearts. A touch of womanhood in it too: *della bella persona, che mi fu tolta;*[2] and how, even in the Pit of woe, it is a solace that *he* will never part from her! Saddest tragedy in these *alti guai.* And the racking winds, in that *aer bruno,*[3] whirl them away again, to wail forever!— Strange to think: Dante was the friend of this poor Francesca's father; Francesca herself may have sat upon the Poet's knee, as a bright innocent little child. Infinite pity, yet also infinite rigor of law: it is so Nature is made; it is so Dante discerned that she was made. What a paltry notion is that of his *Divine Comedy's* being a poor splenetic impotent terrestrial libel; putting those into Hell whom he could not be avenged-upon on earth! I suppose if ever pity, tender as a mother's, was in the heart of any man, it was in Dante's. But a man who does not know rigor cannot pity either. His

[1] The Paolo and Francesca story has several times been made the subject of a play. Among the best treatments are those of George H. Boker (American) and Stephen Phillips.

[2] for the beautiful person who was taken from me. *Inf.* v, 100.

[3] brown air: *i.e.* dusk

very pity will be cowardly, egoistic,—sentimentality, or little better. I know not in the world an affection equal to that of Dante. It is a tenderness, a trembling, longing, pitying love: like the wail of Æolean harps, soft, soft; like a child's young heart;—and then that stern, sore-saddened heart! These longings of his towards his Beatrice; their meeting together in the *Paradiso;* his gazing in her pure transfigured eyes, her that had been purified by death so long, separated from him so far:—one likens it to the song of angels; it is among the purest utterances of affection, perhaps the very purest, that ever came out of a human soul.

For the *intense* Dante is intense in all things; he has got into the essence of all. His intellectual insight as painter, on occasion too as a reasoner, is but the result of all other sorts of intensity. Morally great, above all, we must call him; it is the beginning of all. His scorn, his grief are as transcendent as his love; —as indeed, what are they but the *inverse* or *converse* of his love? *"A Dio spiacenti ed a' nemici sui,* Hateful to God and to the enemies of God:" lofty scorn, unappeasable silent reprobation and aversion; *"Non ragionam di lor,* We will not speak of *them,* look only and pass." Or think of this; "They have not the *hope* to die. *Non han speranza di morte."* One day, it had risen sternly benign on the scathed heart of Dante, that he, wretched, never-resting, worn as he was, would full surely *die;* "that Destiny itself could not doom him not to die." Such words are in this man. For rigor, earnestness and depth, he is not to be paralleled in the modern world; to seek his parallel we must go into the Hebrew Bible, and live with the antique Prophets there.

I do not agree with much modern criticism, in greatly preferring the *Inferno* to the two other parts of the Divine *Commedia.* Such preference belongs, I imagine, to our general Byronism[1] of taste, and is like to be a transient feeling. The *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso,* especially the former, one would almost say, is even more excellent than it. It is a noble thing that *Purgatorio,* "Mountain of Purification;" an emblem of the noblest conception of that age. If Sin is so fatal, and Hell is and must be so rigorous, awful, yet in Repentance too is man purified; Repentance is the grand Christian act. It is beautiful how Dante works it out. The *tremolar dell' onde,* that "trembling" of the ocean-waves, under the first pure gleam of morning, dawning afar on the wandering Two, is as the type of an altered mood. Hope has now dawned; never-dying Hope, if in company still with heavy sorrow. The obscure sojourn of dæmons and reprobate is underfoot; a soft breathing of penitence mounts higher and higher, to the Throne of Mercy itself. "Pray for me," the denizens of that Mount of Pain all say to him. "Tell my Giovanna to pray for me," my daughter Giovanna; "I think her mother loves me no more!" They toil painfully up by that winding steep, "bent-down like corbels of a building," some of them, —crushed-together so "for the sin of pride;" yet nevertheless in years, in ages and æons, they shall have reached the top, which is Heaven's gate, and by Mercy shall have been admitted in. The joy too of all, when one has prevailed; the whole Mountain shakes with joy, and a psalm of praise rises, when one soul has perfected repentance and got its sin and misery left behind! I call all this a noble embodiment of a true noble thought.

But indeed the Three compartments mutually support one another, are indispensable to one another. The *Paradiso,* a kind of inarticulate music to me, is

[1] Taste for what is rather morbid and melodramatic.

the redeeming side of the *Inferno;* the *Inferno* without it were untrue. All three make-up the true Unseen World, as figured in the Christianity of the Middle Ages; a thing forever memorable, forever true in the essence of it, to all men. It was perhaps delineated in no human soul with such depth of veracity as in this of Dante's; a man *sent* to sing it, to keep it long memorable. Very notable with what brief simplicity he passes out of the every-day reality, into the Invisible one; and in the second or third stanza, we find ourselves in the World of Spirits; and dwell there, as among things palpable, indubitable! To Dante they *were* so; the real world, as it is called, and its facts, was but the threshold to an infinitely higher Fact of a World. At bottom, the one was as *preter*natural as the other. Has not each man a soul? He will not only be a spirit, but is one. To the earnest Dante it is all one visible Fact; he believes it, sees it; is the Poet of it in virtue of that. Sincerity, I say again, is the saving merit, now as always.

Dante's Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, are a symbol withal, an emblematic representation of his Belief about this Universe:—some Critic in a future age, like those Scandinavian ones the other day, who has ceased altogether to think as Dante did, may find this too all an "Allegory," perhaps an idle Allegory! It is a sublime embodiment, or sublimest, of the soul of Christianity. It expresses, as in huge world wide architectural emblems, how the Christian Dante felt Good and Evil to be the two polar elements of this Creation, on which it all turns; that these two differ not by *preferability* of one to the other, but by incompatibility absolute and infinite; that the one is excellent and high as light and Heaven, the other hideous, black as Gehenna and the Pit of Hell! Everlasting Justice, yet with Penitence, with everlasting Pity,—all Christianism, as Dante and the Middle Ages had it, is emblemed here. Emblemed: and yet, as I urged the other day, with what entire truth of purpose; how unconscious of any embleming! Hell, Purgatory, Paradise: these things were not fashioned as emblems; was there, in our Modern European Mind, any thought at all of their being emblems! Were they not indubitable awful facts; the whole heart of man taking them for practically true, all Nature everywhere confirming them? So is it always in these things. Men do not believe an Allegory. The future Critic, whatever his new thought may be, who considers this of Dante to have been all got-up as an Allegory, will commit one sore mistake!—Paganism we recognized as a veracious expression of the earnest awe-struck feeling of man towards the Universe; veracious, true once, and still not without worth for us. But mark here the difference of Paganism and Christianism; one great difference. Paganism emblemed chiefly the Operations of Nature; the destinies, efforts, combinations, vicissitudes of things and men in this world; Christianism emblemed the Law of Human Duty, the Moral Law of Man. One was for the sensuous nature: a rude helpless utterance of the *first* Thought of men,—the chief recognized virtue, Courage, Superiority to Fear. The other was not for the sensuous nature, but for the moral. What a progress is here, if in that one respect only!—

And so in this Dante, as we said, had ten silent centuries, in a very strange way, found a voice. The *Divina Commedia* is of Dante's writing; yet in truth *it* belongs to ten Christian centuries, only the finishing of it is Dante's. So always. The craftsman there, the smith with that metal of his, with these tools, with these cunning methods,—how little of all he

does is properly *his* work! All past inventive men work there with him;—as indeed with all of us, in all things. Dante is the spokesman of the Middle Ages; the Thought they lived by stands here, in everlasting music. These sublime ideas of his, terrible and beautiful, are the fruit of the Christian Meditation of all the good men who had gone before him. Precious they; but also is not he precious? Much, had not he spoken, would have been dumb; not dead, yet living voiceless.

On the whole, is it not an utterance, this mystic Song, at once of one of the greatest human souls, and of the highest thing that Europe had hitherto realized for itself? Christianism, as Dante sings it, is another than Paganism in the rude Norse mind; another than "Bastard Christianism" half-articulately spoken in the Arab Desert, seven-hundred years before!—The noble *idea* made *real* hitherto among men, is sung, and emblemed-forth abidingly, by one of the noblest men. In the one sense and in the other, are we not right glad to possess it? As I calculate, it may last yet for long thousands of years. For the thing that is uttered from the inmost parts of a man's soul, differs altogether from what is uttered by the outer part. The outer is of the day, under the empire of mode; the outer passes away, in swift endless changes; the inmost is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. True souls, in all generations of the world, who look on this Dante, will find a brotherhood in him; the deep sincerity of his thoughts, his woes and hopes, will speak likewise to their sincerity; they will feel that this Dante too was a brother. Napoleon in Saint Helena is charmed with the genial veracity of old Homer. The oldest Hebrew Prophet, under a vesture the most diverse from ours, does yet, because he speaks from the heart of man, speak to all men's hearts. It is the one sole secret of continuing long memorable. Dante, for depth of sincerity, is like an antique Prophet too; his words, like theirs, come from his very heart. One need not wonder if it were predicted that his Poem might be the most enduring thing our Europe has yet made; for nothing so endures as a truly spoken word. All cathedrals, pontificalities, brass and stone, and outer arrangement never so lasting, are brief in comparison to an unfathomable heart-song like this: one feels as if it might survive, still of importance to men, when these had all sunk into new irrecognizable combinations, and had ceased individually to be. Europe has made much; great cities, great empires, encyclopædias, creeds, bodies of opinion and practice: but it has made little of the class of Dante's Thought. Homer yet *is,* veritably present face to face with every open soul of us; and Greece, where is *it?* Desolate for thousands of years; away, vanished; a bewildered heap of stones and rubbish, the life and existence of it all gone. Like a dream; like the dust of King Agamemnon! Greece was; Greece, except in the *words* it spoke, is not.

The uses of this Dante? We will not say much about his "uses." A human soul who has once got into that primal element of *Song,* and sung-forth fitly somewhat therefrom, has worked in the *depths* of our existence; feeding through long times the life-*roots* of all excellent human things whatsoever,—in a way that "utilities" will not succeed well in calculating! We will not estimate the Sun by the quantity of gas-light it saves us; Dante shall be invaluable, or of no value. One remark I may make: the contrast in this respect between the Hero-Poet and the Hero-Prophet. In a hundred years, Mahomet, as we saw, had his Arabians at Grenada and at Delhi; Dante's Italians

seem to be yet very much where they were. Shall we say, then, Dante's effect on the world was small in comparison? Not so; his arena is far more restricted; but also it is far nobler, clearer;—perhaps not less but more important. Mahomet speaks to great masses of men, in the coarse dialect adapted to such; a dialect filled with inconsistencies, crudities, follies: on the great masses alone can he act, and there with good and with evil strangely blended. Dante speaks to the noble, the pure and great, in all times and places. Neither does he grow obsolete, as the other does. Dante burns as a pure star, fixed there in the firmament, at which the great and the high of all ages kindle themselves: he is the possession of all the chosen of the world for uncounted time. Dante, one calculates, may long survive Mahomet. In this way the balance may be made straight again.

But, at any rate, it is not by what is called their effect on the world, by what *we* can judge of their effect there, that a man and his work are measured. Effect? Influence? Utility? Let a man *do* his work; the fruit of it is the care of Another than he. It will grow its own fruit; and whether embodied in Caliph Thrones and Arabian Conquests, so that it "fills all Morning and Evening Newspapers," and all Histories, which are a kind of distilled Newspapers; or not embodied so at all;—what matters that? That is not the real fruit of it! The Arabian Caliph, in so far only as he did something, was something. If the great Cause of Man, and Man's work in God's Earth, got no furtherance from the Arabian Caliph, then no matter how many scimitars he drew, how many gold piasters pocketed, and what uproar and blaring he made in this world,—*he* was but a loud-sounding inanity and futility; at bottom, he *was* not at all. Let us honor the great empire of *Silence,* once more! The boundless treasury which we do *not* jingle in our pockets, or count up and present before men! It is perhaps, of all things, the usefulest for each of us to do, in these loud times.——

As Dante, the Italian man, was sent into our world to embody musically the Religion of the Middle Ages, the Religion of our Modern Europe, its Inner Life; so Shakespeare, we may say, embodies for us the Outer Life of our Europe as developed then, its chivalries, courtesies, humors, ambitions, what practical way of thinking, acting, looking at the world, men then had. As in Homer we may still construe Old Greece; so in Shakespeare and Dante, after thousands of years, what our modern Europe was, in Faith and in Practice, will still be legible. Dante has given us the Faith or Soul; Shakespeare, in a not less noble way, has given us the Practice or body. This latter also we were to have; a man was sent for it, the man Shakespeare. Just when that chivalry way of life had reached its last finish, and was on the point of breaking down into slow or swift dissolution, as we now see it everywhere, this other sovereign Poet, with his seeing eye, with his perennial singing voice, was sent to take note of it, to give long-enduring record of it. Two fit men: Dante, deep, fierce as the central fire of the world; Shakespeare, wide, placid, far-seeing, as the Sun, the upper light of the world. Italy produced the one world-voice; we English had the honor of producing the other.

Curious enough how, as it were by mere accident, this man came to us. I think always, so great, quiet, complete and self-sufficing is this Shakespeare, had the Warwickshire Squire[1] not prosecuted him for deer-stealing, we had perhaps

[1] An old, and probably baseless, tradition that Shakespeare was caught poaching in Sir Thomas Lucy's deer park.

never heard of him as a Poet! The woods and skies, the rustic Life of Man in Stratford there, had been enough for this man! But indeed that strange outbudding of our whole English Existence, which we call the Elizabethan Era, did not it too come as of its own accord? The "Tree Igdrasil" buds and withers by its own laws,—too deep for our scanning. Yet it does bud and wither, and every bough and leaf of it is there, by fixed eternal laws; not a Sir Thomas Lucy but comes at the hour fit for him. Curious, I say, and not sufficiently considered: how everything does coöperate with all; not a leaf rotting on the highway but is indissoluble portion of solar and stellar systems; no thought, word or act of man but has sprung withal out of all men, and works sooner or later, recognizably or irrecognizably, on all men! It is all a Tree: circulation of sap and influences, mutual communication of every minutest leaf with the lowest talon of a root, with every other greatest and minutest portion of the whole. The Tree Igdrasil, that has its roots down in the Kingdoms of Hela and Death, and whose boughs overspread the highest Heaven!—

In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan Era with its Shakespeare, as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's Song, had produced this Practical Life which Shakespeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of Practice; the primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle-Age Catholicism was abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before Shakespeare, the noblest product of it, made his appearance. He did make his appearance nevertheless. Nature at her own time, with Catholicism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth; taking small thought of Acts of Parliament. King-Henrys,[1] Queen-Elizabeths[1] go their way; and Nature too goes hers. Acts of Parliament, on the whole, are small, notwithstanding the noise they make. What Act of Parliament, debate at St. Stephen's,[2] on the hustings[3] or elsewhere, was it that brought this Shakespeare into being? No dining at Freemasons' Tavern,[4] opening subscription-lists, selling of shares, and infinite other jangling and true or false endeavoring! This Elizabethan Era, and all its nobleness and blessedness, came without proclamation, preparation of ours. Priceless Shakespeare was the free gift of Nature; given altogether silently; —received altogether silently, as if it had been a thing of little account. And yet, very literally, it is a priceless thing. One should look at that side of matters too.

Of this Shakespeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one; I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakespeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. Such a calmness of depth; placid joyous strength; all things imaged in that great soul of his so true and clear, as in

[1] Opponents of Catholicism in England.

[2] St. Stephen's Chapel, formerly the meeting-place of the House of Commons.

[3] "The temporary platform from which, previous to the Ballot Act of 1872, the nomination of candidates for Parliament was made, and on which these stood while addressing the electors." *N. E. D.*

[4] Six weeks after this lecture was delivered Carlyle attended a meeting at Freemasons' Tavern, at which the London Library was founded. This sentence was added before publication.

a tranquil unfathomable sea! It has been said, that in the constructing of Shakespeare's Dramas there is, apart from all other "faculties" as they are called, an understanding manifested, equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum.*[1] That is true; and it is not a truth that strikes every one. It would become more apparent if we tried, any of us for himself, how, out of Shakespeare's dramatic materials, *we* could fashion such a result! The built house seems all so fit,—everyway as it should be, as if it came there by its own law and the nature of things,—we forget the rude disorderly quarry it was shaped from. The very perfection of the house, as if Nature herself had made it, hides the builder's merit. Perfect, more perfect than any other man, we may call Shakespeare in this: he discerns, knows as by instinct, what condition he works under, what his materials are, what his own force and its relation to them is. It is not a transitory glance of insight that will suffice; it is deliberate illumination of the whole matter; it is a calmly *seeing* eye; a great intellect, in short. How a man, of some wide thing that he has witnessed, will construct a narrative, what kind of picture and delineation he will give of it,—is the best measure you could get of what intellect is in the man. Which circumstance is vital and shall stand prominent; which unessential, fit to be suppressed; where is the true *beginning,* the true sequence and ending? To find out this, you task the whole force of insight that is in the man. He must *understand* the thing; according to the depth of his understanding, will the fitness of his answer be. You will try him so. Does like join itself to like; does the spirit of method stir in that confusion, so that its embroilment becomes order? Can the man say, *Fiat lux,* Let there be light; and out of chaos make a world? Precisely as there is *light* in himself, will he accomplish this.

Or indeed we may say again, it is in what I called Portrait-painting, delineating of men and things, especially of men, that Shakespeare is great. All the greatness of the man comes out decisively here. It is unexampled, I think, that calm creative perspicacity of Shakespeare. The thing he looks at reveals not this or that face of it, but its inmost heart, and generic secret: it dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it. Creative, we said: poetic creation, what is this too but *seeing* the thing sufficiently? The *word* that will describe the thing, follows of itself from such clear intense sight of the thing. And is not Shakespeare's *morality,* his valor, candor, tolerance, truthfulness; his whole victorious strength and greatness, which can triumph over such obstructions, visible there too? Great as the world! No *twisted,* poor convex-concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a perfectly *level* mirror;—that is to say withal, if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man. It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes-in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus; sets them all forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all. *Novum Organum,* and all the intellect you will find in Bacon, is of a quite secondary order; earthly, material, poor in comparison with this. Among modern men, one finds, in strictness, almost nothing of the same rank. Goethe alone, since the days of Shakespeare, reminds me of it. Of him too you say that he *saw* the object; you may say what he himself says of Shakespeare: "His characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal; they show you the hour like

[1] Francis Bacon's great philosophical work.

others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible."

The seeing eye! It is this that discloses the inner harmony of things; what Nature meant, what musical idea Nature has wrapped-up in these often rough embodiments. Something she did mean. To the seeing eye that something were discernible. Are they base, miserable things? You can laugh over them, you can weep over them; you can in some way or other genially relate yourself to them;—you can, at lowest, hold your peace about them, turn away your own and others' face from them, till the hour come for practically exterminating and extinguishing them! At bottom, it is the Poet's first gift, as it is all men's, that he have intellect enough. He will be a Poet if he have: a Poet in word; or failing that, perhaps still better, a Poet in act. Whether he write at all; and if so, whether in prose or in verse, will depend on accidents: who knows on what extremely trivial accidents,—perhaps on his having had a singing-master, on his being taught to sing in his boyhood! But the faculty which enables him to discern the inner heart of things, and the harmony that dwells there (for whatsoever exists has a harmony in the heart of it, or it would not hold together and exist), is not the result of habits or accidents, but the gift of Nature herself; the primary outfit for a Heroic Man in what sort soever. To the Poet, as to every other, we say first of all, *See.* If you cannot do that, it is of no use to keep stringing rhymes together, jingling sensibilities against each other, and *name* yourself a Poet; there is no hope for you. If you can, there is, in prose or verse, in action or speculation, all manner of hope. The crabbed old Schoolmaster used to ask, when they brought him a new pupil, "But are ye sure he's *not a dunce?*" Why, really one might ask the same thing, in regard to every man proposed for whatsoever function; and consider it as the one inquiry needful: Are ye sure he's not a dunce? There is, in this world, no other entirely fatal person.

For, in fact, I say the degree of vision that dwells in a man is a correct measure of the man. If called to define Shakespeare's faculty, I should say superiority of Intellect, and think I had included all under that. What indeed are faculties? We talk of faculties as if they were distinct, things separable; as if a man had intellect, imagination, fancy, &c., as he has hands, feet and arms. That is a capital error. Then again, we hear of a man's "intellectual nature," and of his "moral nature," as if these again were divisible, and existed apart. Necessities of language do perhaps prescribe such forms of utterance; we must speak, I am aware, in that way, if we are to speak at all. But words ought not to harden into things for us. It seems to me, our apprehension of this matter is, for most part, radically falsified thereby. We ought to know withal, and to keep forever in mind, that these divisions are at bottom but *names;* that man's spiritual nature, the vital Force which dwells in him, is essentially one and indivisible; that what we call imagination, fancy, understanding, and so forth, are but different figures of the same Power of Insight, all indissolubly connected with each other, physiognomically related; that if we knew one of them, we might know all of them. Morality itself, what we call the moral quality of a man, what is this but another *side* of the one vital Force whereby he is and works? All that a man does is physiognomical of him. You may see how a man would fight, by the way in which he sings; his courage, or want of courage, is visible in the word he utters, in the opinion he has formed, no less than in the stroke he strikes. He is *one;*

and preaches the same Self abroad in all these ways.

Without hands a man might have feet, and could still walk: but, consider it,—without morality, intellect were impossible for him; a thoroughly immoral *man* could not know anything at all! To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathize with it: that is, be *virtuously* related to it. If he have not the justice to put down his own selfishness at every turn, the courage to stand by the dangerous-true at every turn, how shall he know? His virtues, all of them, will lie recorded in his knowledge. Nature, with her truth, remains to the bad, to the selfish and the pusillanimous forever a sealed book: what such can know of Nature is mean, superficial, small; for the uses of the day merely.—But does not the very Fox know something of Nature? Exactly so: it knows where the geese lodge! The human Reynard, very frequent everywhere in the world, what more does he know but this and the like of this? Nay, it should be considered too, that if the Fox had not a certain vulpine *morality*, he could not even know where the geese were, or get at the geese! If he spent his time in splenetic atrabiliar reflections on his own misery, his ill usage by Nature, Fortune and other Foxes, and so forth; and had not courage, promptitude, practicality, and other suitable vulpine gifts and graces, he would catch no geese. We may say of the Fox too, that his morality and insight are of the same dimensions; different faces of the same internal unity of vulpine life!—These things are worth stating; for the contrary of them acts with manifold very baleful perversion, in this time: what limitations, modifications they require, your own candor will supply.

If I say, therefore, that Shakespeare is the greatest of Intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakespeare's intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect; there is more virtue in it than he himself is aware of. Novalis[1] beautifully remarks of him, that those Dramas of his are Products of Nature too, deep as Nature herself. I find a great truth in this saying. Shakespeare's Art is not Artifice; the noblest worth of it is not there by plan or precontrivance. It grows-up from the deeps of Nature, through this noble sincere soul, who is a voice of Nature. The latest generations of men will find new meanings in Shakespeare, new elucidations of their own human being; "new harmonies with the infinite structure of the Universe; concurrences with later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and senses of man." This well deserves meditating. It is Nature's highest reward to a true simple great soul, that he get thus to be *a part of herself*. Such a man's works, whatsoever he with utmost conscious exertion and forethought shall accomplish, grow up withal *un*consciously, from the unknown deeps in him;—as the oak-tree grows from the Earth's bosom, as the mountains and waters shape themselves; with a symmetry grounded on Nature's own laws, comformable to all Truth whatsoever. How much in Shakespeare lies hid; his sorrows, his silent struggles known to himself; much that was not known at all, not speakable at all: like *roots*, like sap and forces working underground! Speech is great; but Silence is greater.

Withal the joyful tranquillity of this man is notable. I will not blame Dante for his misery: it is as battle without victory; but true battle,—the first, indispensable thing. Yet I call Shakespeare greater than Dante, in that he fought

[1] Pseudonym of Friedrich von Hardenberg (1772-1801), German poet.

truly, and did conquer. Doubt it not, he had his own sorrows: those *Sonnets* of his will even testify expressly in what deep waters he had waded, and swum struggling for his life;—as what man like him ever failed to have to do? It seems to me a heedless notion, our common one, that he sat like a bird on the bough; and sang forth, free and offhand, never knowing the troubles of other men. Not so; with nò man is it so. How could a man travel forward from rustic deer-poaching to such tragedy-writing, and not fall-in with sorrows by the way? Or, still better, how could a man delineate a Hamlet, a Coriolanus, a Macbeth, so many suffering heroic hearts, if his own heroic heart had never suffered?—And now, in contrast with all this, observe his mirthfulness, his genuine overflowing love of laughter! You would say, in no point does he *exaggerate* but only in laughter. Fiery objurgations, words that pierce and burn, are to be found in Shakespeare; yet he is always in measure here; never what Johnson would remark as a specially "good hater." But his laughter seems to pour from him in floods; he heaps all manner of ridiculous nicknames on the butt he is bantering, tumbles and tosses him in all sorts of horse-play; you would say, with his whole heart laughs. And then, if not always the finest, it is always a genial laughter. Not at mere weakness, at misery or poverty; never. No man who *can* laugh, what we call laughing, will laugh at these things. It is some poor character only *desiring* to laugh, and have the credit of wit, that does so. Laughter means sympathy; good laughter is not "the crackling of thorns under the pot." [1] Even at stupidity and pretension this Shakespeare does not laugh otherwise than genially. Dogberry and Verges [2] tickle our very hearts; and we dismiss them covered with explosions of laughter: but we like the poor fellows only the better for our laughing; and hope they will get on well there, and continue Presidents of the City-watch. Such laughter, like sunshine on the deep sea, is very beautiful to me.

We have no room to speak of Shakespeare's individual works; though perhaps there is much still waiting to be said on that head. Had we, for instance, all his plays reviewed as *Hamlet*, in *Wilhelm Meister*,[3] is! A thing which might, one day, be done. August Wilhelm Schlegel [4] has a remark on his Historical Plays, *Henry Fifth* and the others, which is worth remembering. He calls them a kind of National Epic. Marlborough,[5] you recollect, said, he knew no English History but what he had learned from Shakespeare. There are really, if we look to it, few as memorable Histories. The great salient points are admirably seized; all rounds itself off, into a kind of rhythmic coherence; it is, as Schlegel says, *epic*;—as indeed all delineation by a great thinker will be. There are right beautiful things in those Pieces, which indeed together form one beautiful thing. That battle of Agincourt [6] strikes me as one of the most perfect things, in its sort, we anywhere have of Shakespeare's. The description of the two hosts: the worn-out, jaded English; the dread hour, big with destiny, when the battle shall begin; and then that deathless valor: "Ye good yeomen, whose limbs were made in England!" [7] There is a noble Patriotism in

[1] For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity. *Eccles.* VII, 6.

[2] The foolish watchmen in *Much Ado about Nothing*.

[3] Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Book IV, iii-v, xii.

[4] German poet and critic (1767-1845).

[5] Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722).

[6] *Hen. V*, IV.

[7] From Henry's speech before Harfleur:

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
Or close the wall up with our English dead. . . .
And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture. (III, i.)

it,—far other than the "indifference" you sometimes hear ascribed to Shakespeare. A true English heart breathes, calm and strong, through the whole business; not boisterous, protrusive; all the better for that. There is a sound in it like the ring of steel. This man too had a right stroke in him, had it come to that!

But I will say, of Shakespeare's works generally, that we have no full impress of him there; even as full as we have of many men. His works are so many windows, through which we see a glimpse of the world that was in him. All his works seem, comparatively speaking, cursory, imperfect, written under cramping circumstances; giving only here and there a note of the full utterance of the man. Passages there are that come upon you like splendor out of Heaven; bursts of radiance, illuminating the very heart of the thing: you say, "That is *true,* spoken once and forever; wheresoever and whensoever there is an open human soul, that will be recognized as true!" Such bursts, however, make us feel that the surrounding matter is not radiant; that it is, in part, temporary, conventional. Alas, Shakespeare had to write for the Globe Playhouse: his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould. It was with him, then, as it is with us all. No man works save under conditions. The sculptor cannot set his own free Thought before us; but his Thought as he could translate it into the stone that was given, with the tools that were given. *Disjecta membra*[1] are all that we find of any Poet, or of any man.

Whoever looks intelligently at this Shakespeare may recognize that he too was a *Prophet,* in his way; of an insight analogous to the Prophetic, though he took it up in another strain. Nature seemed to this man also divine; *un*speakable, deep as Tophet, high as Heaven: "We are such stuff as Dreams are made of!" That scroll[2] in Westminster Abbey, which few read with understanding, is of the depth of any seer. But the man sang; did not preach, except musically. We called Dante the melodious Priest of Middle-Age Catholicism. May we not call Shakespeare the still more melodious Priest of a *true* Catholicism, the "Universal Church" of the Future and of all times? No narrow superstition, harsh asceticism, intolerance, fanatical fierceness or perversion: a Revelation, so far as it goes, that such a thousandfold hidden beauty and divineness dwells in all Nature; which let all men worship as they can! We may say without offence, that there rises a kind of universal Psalm out of this Shakespeare too; not unfit to make itself heard among the still more sacred Psalms. Not in disharmony with these, if we understood them, but in harmony!—I cannot call this Shakespeare a "Sceptic," as some do; his indifference to the creeds and theological quarrels of his time misleading them. No: neither unpatriotic, though he says little about his Patriotism; nor skeptic, though he says little about his Faith. Such "indifference" was the fruit of his greatness withal: his whole heart was in his own grand sphere of worship (we may call it such); these other controversies, vitally important to other men, were not vital to him.

But call it worship, call it what you will, is it not a right glorious thing, and set of things, this that Shakespeare has brought us? For myself, I feel that there is actually a kind of sacredness in the fact of such a man being sent into this Earth. Is he not an eye to us all; a blessed heaven-sent Bringer of Light?—And, at bottom, was it not perhaps far

[1] scattered parts

[2] Held in the left hand of the statue of Shakespeare, containing part of Prospero's speech in the *Tempest,* IV. i. 152 ff.

better that this Shakespeare, everyway an unconscious man, was *conscious* of no Heavenly message? He did not feel, like Mahomet, because he saw into those internal Splendors, that he specially was the "Prophet of God:" and was he not greater than Mahomet in that? Greater; and also, if we compute strictly, as we did in Dante's case, more successful. It was intrinsically an error that notion of Mahomet's, of his supreme Prophethood; and has come down to us inextricably involved in error to this day; dragging along with it such a coil of fables, impurities, intolerances, as makes it a questionable step for me here and now to say, as I have done, that Mahomet was a true Speaker at all, and not rather an ambitious charlatan, perversity and simulacrum; no Speaker, but a Babbler! Even in Arabia, as I compute, Mahomet will have exhausted himself and become obsolete, while this Shakespeare, this Dante may still be young;—while this Shakespeare may still pretend to be a Priest of Mankind, of Arabia as of other places, for unlimited periods to come!

Compared with any speaker or singer one knows, even with Æschylus[1] or Homer, why should he not, for veracity and universality, last like them? He is *sincere* as they; reaches deep down like them, to the universal and perennial. But as for Mahomet, I think it had been better for him *not* to be so conscious! Alas, poor Mahomet; all that he was *conscious* of was a mere error; a futility and triviality,—as indeed such ever is. The truly great in him too was the unconscious: that he was a wild Arab lion of the desert, and did speak-out with that great thunder-voice of his, not by words which he *thought* to be great, but by actions, by feelings, by a history which *were* great! His Koran has become a stupid piece of prolix absurdity; we do not believe, like him, that God wrote that! The Great Man here too, as always, is a Force of Nature: whatsoever is truly great in him springs-up from the *in*articulate deeps.

Well: this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant, who rose to be Manager of a Playhouse, so that he could live without begging; whom the Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on; whom Sir Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the Treadmill! We did not account him a god, like Odin, while he dwelt with us;— on which point there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat: In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakespeare has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of Englishmen, would we not give-up rather than the Stratford Peasant? There is no regiment of highest Dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honor among foreign nations, as an ornament to our English Household, what item is there that we would not surrender rather than him? Consider now, if they asked us, Will you give-up your Indian Empire or your Shakespeare, you English; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shakespeare? Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer: Indian Empire, or no Indian Empire; we cannot do without Shakespeare! Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day; but this Shakespeare does not go, he lasts forever with us; we cannot give-up our Shakespeare!

Nay, apart from spiritualities; and considering him merely as a real, marketable, tangibly-useful possession. Eng-

[1] Greek dramatist (525-456 B. C.)

land, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland [1] east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall-out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish: what is it that will accomplish this? Acts of Parliament, administrative prime-ministers cannot. America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it: Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone! This King Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs; *in*destructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta,[2] from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another: "Yes, this Shakespeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him." The most common-sense politician, too, if he pleases, may think of that.

Yes, truly, it is a great thing for a Nation that it get an articulate voice; that it produce a man who will speak-forth melodiously what the heart of it means! Italy, for example, poor Italy lies dismembered, scattered asunder, not appearing in any protocol or treaty as a unity at all; yet the noble Italy is actually *one:* Italy produced its Dante; Italy can speak! The Czar of all the Russias, he is strong with so many bayonets, Cossacks and cannons; and does a great feat in keeping such a tract of Earth politically together; but he cannot yet speak. Something great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius, to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb monster hitherto. His cannons and Cossacks will all have rusted into nonentity, while that Dante's voice is still audible. The Nation that has a Dante is bound together as no dumb Russia can be.—We must here end what we had to say of the *Hero-Poet.*

[1] Australia

[2] A town in New South Wales.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819–1900)

THE ROOTS OF HONOR [3]

Among the delusions which at different periods have possessed themselves of the minds of large masses of the human race, perhaps the most curious—certainly the least creditable—is the modern *soi-disant* science of political economy, based on the idea that an advantageous code of social action may be determined irrespectively of the influence of social affection.

Of course, as in the instances of alchemy, astrology, witchcraft, and other such popular creeds, political economy has a plausible idea at the root of it. "The social affections," says the economist, "are accidental and disturbing elements in human nature; but avarice and the desire of progress are constant elements. Let us eliminate the inconstants, and, considering the human being merely as a covetous machine, examine

[3] *Unto This Last,* Essay I.

by what laws of labor, purchase, and sale, the greatest accumulative result in wealth is obtainable. Those laws once determined, it will be for each individual afterwards to introduce as much of the disturbing affectionate element as he chooses, and to determine for himself the result on the new conditions supposed."

This would be a perfectly logical and successful method of analysis, if the accidentals afterwards to be introduced were of the same nature as the powers first examined. Supposing a body in motion to be influenced by constant and inconstant forces, it is usually the simplest way of examining its course to trace it first under the persistent conditions, and afterwards introduce the causes of variation. But the disturbing elements in the social problem are not of the same nature as the constant ones: they alter the essence of the creature under examination the moment they are added; they operate, not mathematically, but chemically, introducing conditions which render all our previous knowledge unavailable. We made learned experiments upon pure nitrogen, and have convinced ourselves that it is a very manageable gas: but behold! the thing which we have practically to deal with is its chloride; and this, the moment we touch it on our established principles, sends us and our apparatus through the ceiling.

Observe, I neither impugn nor doubt the conclusions of the science, if its terms are accepted. I am simply uninterested in them, as I should be in those of a science of gymnastics which assumed that men had no skeletons. It might be shown, on that supposition, that it would be advantageous to roll the students up into pellets, flatten them into cakes, or stretch them into cables; and that when these results were effected, the re-insertion of the skeleton would be attended with various inconveniences to their constitution. The reasoning might be admirable, the conclusions true, and the science deficient only in applicability. Modern political economy stands on a precisely similar basis. Assuming, not that the human being has no skeleton, but that it is all skeleton, it founds an ossifiant theory of progress [1] on this negation of a soul; and having shown the utmost that may be made of bones, and constructed a number of interesting geometrical figures with death's-heads and humeri,[2] successfully proves the inconvenience of the reappearance of a soul among these corpuscular structures. I do not deny the truth of this theory: I simply deny its applicability to the present phase of the world.

This inapplicability has been curiously manifested during the embarrassment caused by the late strikes of our workmen. Here occurs one of the simplest cases, in a pertinent and positive form, of the first vital problem which political economy has to deal with (the relation between employer and employed); and, at a severe crisis, when lives in multitudes and wealth in masses are at stake, the political economists are helpless—practically mute: no demonstrable solution of the difficulty can be given by them, such as may convince or calm the opposing parties. Obstinately the masters take one view of the matter; obstinately the operatives another; and no political science can set them at one.

It would be strange if it could, it being not by "science" of any kind that men were ever intended to be set at one. Disputant after disputant vainly tries to show that the interests of the masters are, or are not, antagonistic to those of the men: none of the pleaders ever seeming to remember that it does not absolutely or always follow that the persons

[1] *I.e.*, progress is a mere matter of bone making.

[2] bones of the upper arms

must be antagonistic because their interests are. If there is only a crust of bread in the house, and mother and children are starving, their interests are not the same. If the mother eats it, the children want it; if the children eat it, the mother must go hungry to her work. Yet it does not necessarily follow that there will be "antagonism" between them, that they will fight for the crust, and that the mother, being strongest, will get it, and eat it. Neither, in any other case, whatever the relations of the persons may be, can it be assumed for certain that, because their interests are diverse, they must necessarily regard each other with hostility, and use violence or cunning to obtain the advantage.

Even if this were so, and it were as just as it is convenient to consider men as actuated by no other moral influences than those which affect rats or swine, the logical conditions of the question are still indeterminable. It can never be shown generally either that the interests of master and laborer are alike, or that they are opposed; for, according to circumstances, they may be either. It is, indeed, always the interest of both that the work should be rightly done, and a just price obtained for it; but, in the division of profits, the gain of the one may or may not be the loss of the other. It is not the master's interest to pay wages so low as to leave the men sickly and depressed, nor the workman's interest to be paid high wages if the smallness of the master's profit hinders him from enlarging his business, or conducting it in a safe and liberal way. A stoker ought not to desire high pay if the company is too poor to keep the engine-wheels in repair.

And the varieties of circumstance which influence these reciprocal interests are so endless, that all endeavor to deduce rules of action from balance of expediency is in vain. And it is meant to be in vain. For no human actions ever were intended by the Maker of men to be guided by balances of expediency, but by balances of justice. He has therefore rendered all endeavors to determine expediency futile for evermore. No man ever knew, or can know, what will be the ultimate result to himself, or to others, of any given line of conduct. But every man may know, and most of us do know, what is a just and unjust act. And all of us may know also, that the consequences of justice will be ultimately the best possible, both to others and ourselves, though we can neither say what *is* best, nor how it is likely to come to pass.

I have said balances of justice, meaning, in the term justice, to include affection,—such affection as one man *owes* to another. All right relations between master and operative, and all their best interests, ultimately depend on these.

We shall find the best and simplest illustration of the relations of master and operative in the position of domestic servants.

We will suppose that the master of a household desires only to get as much work out of his servants as he can, at the rate of wages he gives. He never allows them to be idle; feeds them as poorly and lodges them as ill as they will endure, and in all things pushes his requirements to the exact point beyond which he cannot go without forcing the servant to leave him. In doing this, there is no violation on his part of what is commonly called "justice." He agrees with the domestic for his whole time and service, and takes them;—the limits of hardship in treatment being fixed by the practice of other masters in his neighborhood; that is to say, by the current rate of wages for domestic labor. If the servant can get a better place, he is free to take one, and the master can only tell what is the real

market value of his labor, by requiring as much as he will give.

This is the politico-economical view of the case, according to the doctors of that science; who assert that by this procedure the greatest average of work will be obtained from the servant, and therefore the greatest benefit to the community, and through the community, by reversion, to the servant himself.

That, however, is not so. It would be so if the servant were an engine of which the motive power was steam, magnetism, gravitation, or any other agent of calculable force. But he being, on the contrary, an engine whose motive power is a Soul, the force of this very peculiar agent, as an unknown quantity, enters into all the political economist's equations, without his knowledge, and falsifies every one of their results. The largest quantity of work will not be done by this curious engine for pay, or under pressure, or by help of any kind of fuel which may be supplied by the chaldron. It will be done only when the motive force, that is to say, the will or spirit of the creature, is brought to its greatest strength by its own proper fuel: namely, by the affections.

It may indeed happen, and does happen often, that if the master is a man of sense and energy, a large quantity of material work may be done under mechanical pressure, enforced by strong will and guided by wise method; also it may happen, and does happen often, that if the master is indolent and weak (however good-natured), a very small quantity of work, and that bad, may be produced by the servant's undirected strength, and contemptuous gratitude. But the universal law of the matter is that, assuming any given quantity of energy and sense in master and servant, the greatest material result obtainable by them will be, not through antagonism to each other, but through affection for each other; and that, if the master, instead of endeavoring to get as much work as possible from the servant, seeks rather to render his appointed and necessary work beneficial to him, and to forward his interests in all just and wholesome ways, the real amount of work ultimately done, or of good rendered, by the person so cared for, will indeed be the greatest possible.

Observe, I say, "of good rendered," for a servant's work is not necessarily or always the best thing he can give his master. But good of all kinds, whether in material service, in protective watchfulness of his master's interest and credit, or in joyful readiness to seize unexpected and irregular occasions of help.

Nor is this one whit less generally true because indulgence will be frequently abused, and kindness met with ingratitude. For the servant who, gently treated, is ungrateful, treated ungently, will be revengeful; and the man who is dishonest to a liberal master, will be injurious to an unjust one.

In any case, and with any person, this unselfish treatment will produce the most effective return. Observe, I am here considering the affections wholly as a motive power; not at all as things in themselves desirable or noble, or in any other way abstractedly good. I look at them simply as an anomalous force, rendering every one of the ordinary political economist's calculations nugatory; while, even if he desired to introduce this new element into his estimates, he has no power of dealing with it; for the affections only become a true motive power when they ignore every other motive and condition of political economy. Treat the servant kindly, with the idea of turning his gratitude to account, and you will get, as you deserve, no gratitude, nor any value for your kindness; but treat him kindly without any economical purpose, and all economi-

cal purposes will be answered; in this, as in all other matters, whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whoso loses it shall find it.[1]

The next clearest and simplest example of relation between master and operative is that which exists between the commander of a regiment and his men.

Supposing the officer only desires to apply the rules of discipline so as, with least trouble to himself, to make the regiment most effective, he will not be able, by any rules, or administration of rules, on this selfish principle, to develop the full strength of his subordinates. If a man of sense and firmness, he may, as in the former instance, produce a better result than would be obtained by the irregular kindness of a weak officer; but let the sense and firmness be the same in both cases, and assuredly the officer who has the most direct personal relations with his men, the most care for their interests, and the most value for their lives, will develop their effective strength, through their affection for his own person, and trust in his character, to a degree wholly unattainable by other means. This law applies still more stringently as the numbers concerned are larger; a charge may often be successful, though the men dislike their officers; a battle has rarely been won, unless they loved their general.

Passing from these simple examples to the more complicated relations existing between a manufacturer and his workmen, we are met first by certain curious difficulties, resulting, apparently, from a harder and colder state of moral elements. It is easy to imagine an enthusiastic affection existing among soldiers for the colonel. Not so easy to imagine an enthusiastic affection among cotton-spinners for the proprietor of the mill. A body of men associated for purposes of robbery (as a Highland clan in ancient times) shall be animated by perfect affection, and every member of it be ready to lay down his life for the life of his chief. But a band of men associated for purposes of legal production and accumulation is usually animated, it appears, by no such emotions, and none of them are in anywise willing to give his life for the life of his chief. Not only are we met by this apparent anomaly, in moral matters, but by others connected with it, in administration of system. For a servant or a soldier is engaged at a definite rate of wages, for a definite period; but a workman at a rate of wages variable according to the demand for labor, and with the risk of being at any time thrown out of his situation by chances of trade. Now, as under these contingencies, no action of the affections can take place, but only an explosive action of *dis*affections, two points offer themselves for consideration in the matter.

The first—How far the rate of wages

[1] The difference between the two modes of treatment, and between their effective material results, may be seen very accurately by a comparison of the relations of Esther and Charlie in *Bleak House*, with those of Miss Brass and the Marchioness in *Master Humphrey's Clock*.

The essential value and truth of Dickens's writings have been unwisely lost sight of by many thoughtful persons merely because he presents his truth with some color of caricature. Unwisely, because Dickens's caricature, though often gross, is never mistaken. Allowing for his manner of telling them, the things he tells us are always true. I wish that he could think it right to limit his brilliant exaggeration to works written only for public amusement; and when he takes up a subject of high national importance, such as that which he handled in *Hard Times*, that he would use severer and more accurate analysis. The usefulness of that work (to my mind, in several respects, the greatest he has written) is with many persons seriously diminished because Mr. Bounderby is a dramatic monster, instead of a characteristic example of a worldly master; and Stephen Blackpool a dramatic perfection, instead of a characteristic example of an honest workman. But let us not lose the use of Dickens's wit and insight, because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire. He is entirely right in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially *Hard Times*, should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust; but if they examine all the evidence on the other side, which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all their trouble, that his view was the finally right one, grossly and sharply told.

may be so regulated as not to vary with the demand for labor.

The second—How far it is possible that bodies of workmen may be engaged and maintained at such fixed rate of wages (whatever the state of trade may be), without enlarging or diminishing their number, so as to give them permanent interest in the establishment with which they are connected, like that of the domestic servants in an old family, or an *esprit de corps*, like that of the soldiers in a crack regiment.

The first question is, I say, how far it may be possible to fix the rate of wages, irrespectively of the demand for labor.

Perhaps one of the most curious facts in the history of human error is the denial by the common political economist of the possibility of thus regulating wages; while, for all the important, and much of the unimportant, labor, on the earth, wages are already so regulated.

We do not sell our prime-ministership by Dutch auction; nor, on the decease of a bishop, whatever may be the general advantages of simony, do we (yet) offer his diocese to the clergyman who will take the episcopacy at the lowest contract. We (with exquisite sagacity of political economy!) do indeed sell commissions; but not openly, generalships: sick, we do not inquire for a physician who takes less than a guinea; litigious, we never think of reducing six-and-eightpence to four-and-sixpence; caught in a shower, we do not canvass the cabmen, to find one who values his driving at less than six-pence a mile.

It is true that in all these cases there is, and in every conceivable case there must be, ultimate reference to the presumed difficulty of the work, or number of candidates for the office. If it were thought that the labor necessary to make a good physician would be gone through by a sufficient number of students with the prospect of only half-guinea fees, public consent would soon withdraw the unnecessary half-guinea. In this ultimate sense, the price of labor is indeed always regulated by the demand for it; but, so far as the practical and immediate administration of the matter is regarded, the best labor always has been, and is, as *all* labor ought to be, paid by an invariable standard.

"What!" the reader perhaps answers amazedly: "pay good and bad workmen alike?"

Certainly. The difference between one prelate's sermons and his successor's —or between one physician's opinion and another's,—is far greater, as respects the qualities of mind involved, and far more important in result to you personally, than the difference between good and bad laying of bricks (though that is greater than most people suppose). Yet you pay with equal fee, contentedly, the good and bad workmen upon your soul, the good and bad workmen upon your body; much more may you pay, contentedly, with equal fees, the good and bad workmen upon your house.

"Nay, but I choose my physician, and (?) my clergyman, thus indicating my sense of the quality of their work." By all means, also, choose your bricklayer; that is the proper reward of the good workman, to be "chosen." The natural and right system respecting all labor is, that it should be paid at a fixed rate, but the good workman employed, and the bad workman unemployed. The false, unnatural, and destructive system is when the bad workman is allowed to offer his work at half-price, and either take the place of the good, or force him by his competition to work for an inadequate sum.

This equality of wages, then, being the first object towards which we have to discover the directest available road, the

second is, as above stated, that of maintaining constant numbers of workmen in employment, whatever may be the accidental demand for the article they produce.

I believe the sudden and extensive inequalities of demand, which necessarily arise in the mercantile operations of an active nation, constitute the only essential difficulty which has to be overcome in a just organization of labor.

The subject opens into too many branches to admit of being investigated in a paper of this kind; but the following general facts bearing on it may be noted.

The wages which enable any workman to live are necessarily higher, if his work is liable to intermission, than if it is assured and continuous; and however severe the struggle for work may become, the general law will always hold, that men must get more daily pay if, on the average, they can only calculate on work three days a week than they would require if they were sure of work six days a week. Supposing that a man cannot live on less than a shilling a day, his seven shillings he must get, either for three days' violent work, or six days' deliberate work. The tendency of all modern mercantile operations is to throw both wages and trade into the form of a lottery, and to make the workman's pay depend on intermittent exertion, and the principal's profit on dexterously used chance.

In what partial degree, I repeat, this may be necessary in consequence of the activities of modern trade, I do not here investigate; contenting myself with the fact that in its fatalest aspects it is assuredly unnecessary, and results merely from love of gambling on the part of the masters, and from ignorance and sensuality in the men. The masters cannot bear to let any opportunity of gain escape them, and frantically rush at every gap and breach in the walls of Fortune, raging to be rich, and affronting, with impatient covetousness, every risk of ruin; while the men prefer three days of violent labor, and three days of drunkenness, to six days of moderate work and wise rest. There is no way in which a principal, who really desires to help his workmen, may do it more effectually than by checking these disorderly habits both in himself and them; keeping his own business operations on a scale which will enable him to pursue them securely, not yielding to temptations of precarious gain; and at the same time, leading his workmen into regular habits of labor and life, either by inducing them rather to take low wages, in the form of a fixed salary, than high wages, subject to the chance of their being thrown out of work; or, if this be impossible, by discouraging the system of violent exertion for nominally high day wages, and leading the men to take lower pay for more regular labor.

In effecting any radical changes of this kind, doubtless there would be great inconvenience and loss incurred by all the originators of the movement. That which can be done with perfect convenience and without loss, is not always the thing that most needs to be done, or which we are most imperatively required to do.

I have already alluded to the difference hitherto existing between regiments of men associated for purposes of violence, and for purposes of manufacture; in that the former appear capable of self-sacrifice—the latter, not; which singular fact is the real reason of the general lowness of estimate in which the profession of commerce is held, as compared with that of arms. Philosophically, it does not, at first sight, appear reasonable (many writers have endeavored to prove it unreasonable) that a peaceable and rational person, whose trade is buying and selling, should be held in less honor than an unpeaceable and often irrational person,

whose trade is slaying. Nevertheless, the consent of mankind has always, in spite of the philosophers, given precedence to the soldier.

And this is right.

For the soldier's trade, verily and essentially, is not slaying, but being slain. This, without well knowing its own meaning, the world honors it for. A bravo's trade is slaying; but the world has never respected bravos more than merchants: the reason it honors the soldier is, because he holds his life at the service of the State. Reckless he may be—fond of pleasure or of adventure—all kinds of by-motives and mean impulses may have determined the choice of his profession, and may affect (to all appearance exclusively) his daily conduct in it; but our estimate of him is based on this ultimate fact—of which we are well assured—that put him in a fortress breach, with all the pleasures of the world behind him, and only death and his duty in front of him, he will keep his face to the front; and he knows that his choice may be put to him at any moment, and has beforehand taken his part—virtually takes such part continually—does, in reality, die daily.

Not less is the respect we pay to the lawyer and physician, founded ultimately on their self-sacrifice. Whatever the learning or acuteness of a great lawyer, our chief respect for him depends on our belief that, set in a judge's seat, he will strive to judge justly, come of it what may. Could we suppose that he would take bribes, and use his acuteness and legal knowledge to give plausibility to iniquitous decisions, no degree of intellect would win for him our respect. Nothing will win it, short of our tacit conviction, that in all important acts of his life justice is first with him; his own interest, second.

In the case of a physician, the ground of the honor we render him is clearer still. Whatever his science, we would shrink from him in horror if we found him regard his patients merely as subjects to experiment upon; much more, if we found that, receiving bribes from persons interested in their deaths, he was using his best skill to give poison in the mask of medicine.

Finally, the principle holds with utmost clearness as it respects clergymen. No goodness of disposition will excuse want of science in a physician, or of shrewdness in an advocate; but a clergyman, even though his power of intellect be small, is respected on the presumed ground of his unselfishness and serviceableness.

Now, there can be no question but that the tact, foresight, decision, and other mental powers, required for the successful management of a large mercantile concern, if not such as could be compared with those of a great lawyer, general, or divine, would at least match the general conditions of mind required in the subordinate officers of a ship, or of a regiment, or in the curate of a country parish. If, therefore, all the efficient members of the so-called liberal professions are still, somehow, in public estimate of honor, preferred before the head of a commercial firm, the reason must lie deeper than in the measurement of their several powers of mind.

And the essential reason for such preference will be found to lie in the fact that the merchant is presumed to act always selfishly. His work may be very necessary to the community; but the motive of it is understood to be wholly personal. The merchant's first object in all his dealings must be (the public believe) to get as much for himself, and leave as little to his neighbor (or customer) as possible. Enforcing this upon him, by political statute, as the necessary principle of his action; recommend-

ing it to him on all occasions, and themselves reciprocally adopting it, proclaiming vociferously, for law of the universe, that a buyer's function is to cheapen, and a seller's to cheat,—the public, nevertheless, involuntarily condemn the man of commerce for his compliance with their own statement, and stamp him forever as belonging to an inferior grade of human personality.

This they will find, eventually, they must give up doing. They must not cease to condemn selfishness; but they will have to discover a kind of commerce which is not exclusively selfish. Or, rather, they will have to discover that there never was, or can be, any other kind of commerce; that this which they have called commerce was not commerce at all, but cozening; and that a true merchant differs as much from a merchant, according to laws of modern political economy, as the hero of the *Excursion*[1] from Autolycus.[2] They will find that commerce is an occupation which gentlemen will every day see more need to engage in, rather than in the businesses of taking to men, or slaying them; that, in true commerce, as in true preaching, or true fighting, it is necessary to admit the idea of occasional voluntary loss;—that sixpences have to be lost, as well as lives, under a sense of duty; that the market may have its martyrdoms as well as the pulpit; and trade its heroisms as well as war.

May have—in the final issue, must have—and only has not had yet, because men of heroic temper have always been misguided in their youth into other fields; not recognizing what is in our days, perhaps, the most important of all fields; so that, while many a zealous person loses his life in trying to teach the form of a gospel, very few will lose a hundred pounds in showing the practice of one.

The fact is, that people never have had clearly explained to them the true functions of a merchant with respect to other people. I should like the reader to be very clear about this.

Five great intellectual professions, relating to daily necessities of life, have hitherto existed—three exist necessarily, in every civilized nation:

The Soldier's profession is to *defend* it.

The Pastor's to *teach* it.

The Physician's to *keep it in health.*

The Lawyer's to *enforce justice* in it.

The Merchant's to *provide* for it.

And the duty of all these men is, on due occasion, to *die* for it.

"On due occasion," namely:—

The Soldier, rather than leave his post in battle.

The Physician, rather than leave his post in plague.

The Pastor, rather than teach Falsehood.

The Lawyer, rather than countenance Injustice.

The Merchant—what is *his* "due occasion" of death?

It is the main question for the merchant, as for all of us. For, truly, the man who does not know when to die, does not know how to live.

Observe, the merchant's function (or manufacturer's, for in the broad sense in which it is here used the word must be understood to include both) is to provide for the nation. It is no more his function to get profit for himself out of that provision than it is a clergyman's function to get his stipend. The stipend is a due and necessary adjunct, but not the object of his life, if he be a true clergyman, any more than his fee (or *honorarium*) is the object of life to a true physician. Neither is his fee the object of life to a true merchant. All three, if true men, have a

[1] Wordsworth's poem, one of the characters in which is a peddler.

[2] In Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale.*

work to be done irrespective of fee—to be done even at any cost, or for quite the contrary of fee; the pastor's function being to teach, the physician's to heal, and the merchant's, as I have said, to provide. That is to say, he has to understand to their very root the qualities of the thing he deals in, and the means of obtaining or producing it; and he has to apply all his sagacity and energy to the producing or obtaining it in perfect state, and distributing it at the cheapest possible price where it is most needed.

And because the production or obtaining of any commodity involves necessarily the agency of many lives and hands, the merchant becomes in the course of his business the master and governor of large masses of men in a more direct, though less confessed way, than a military officer or pastor; so that on him falls, in great part, the responsibility for the kind of life they lead; and it becomes his duty, not only to be always considering how to produce what he sells in the purest and cheapest forms, but how to make the various employments involved in the production, or transference of it, most beneficial to the men employed.

And as into these two functions, requiring for their right exercise the highest intelligence, as well as patience, kindness, and tact, the merchant is bound to put all his energy, so for their just discharge he is bound, as soldier or physician is bound, to give up, if need be, his life, in such way as may be demanded of him. Two main points he has in his providing function to maintain: first, his engagements (faithfulness to engagements being the real root of all possibilities in commerce); and, secondly, the perfectness and purity of the thing provided; so that, rather than fail in any engagement, or consent to any deterioration, adulteration, or unjust and exorbitant price of that which he provides, he is bound to meet fearlessly any form of distress, poverty, or labor, which may, through maintenance of these points, come upon him.

Again: in his office as governor of the men employed by him, the merchant or manufacturer is invested with a distinctly paternal authority and responsibility. In most cases, a youth entering a commercial establishment is withdrawn altogether from home influence; his master must become his father, else he has, for practical and constant help, no father at hand; in all cases the master's authority, together with the general tone and atmosphere of his business, and the character of the men with whom the youth is compelled in the course of it to associate, have more immediate and pressing weight than the home influence, and will usually neutralize it either for good or evil; so that the only means which the master has of doing justice to the men employed by him is to ask himself sternly whether he is dealing with such subordinate as he would with his own son, if compelled by circumstances to take such a position.

Supposing the captain of a frigate saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of a common sailor; as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of the men under him. So, also, supposing the master of a manufactory saw it right, or were by any chance obliged, to place his own son in the position of an ordinary workman; as he would then treat his son, he is bound always to treat every one of his men. This is the only effective, true, or practical RULE which can be given on this point of political economy.

And as the captain of a ship is bound to be the last man to leave his ship in case of wreck, and to share his last crust with the sailors in case of famine, so the

manufacturer, in any commercial crisis or distress, is bound to take the suffering of it with his men, and even to take more of it for himself than he allows his men to feel; as a father would in a famine, shipwreck, or battle, sacrifice himself for his son.

All which sounds very strange; the only real strangeness in the matter being, nevertheless, that it should so sound. For all this is true, and that not partially nor theoretically, but everlastingly and practically; all other doctrine than this respecting matters political being false in premises, absurd in deduction, and impossible in practice, consistently with any progressive state of national life; all the life which we now possess as a nation showing itself in the resolute denial and scorn, by a few strong minds and faithful hearts, of the economic principles taught to our multitudes, which principles, so far as accepted, lead straight to national destruction. Respecting the modes and forms of destruction to which they lead, and, on the other hand, respecting the farther practical working of true polity, I hope to reason further in a following paper.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

LITERATURE AND SCIENCE [1]

Practical people talk with a smile of Plato and of his absolute ideas; and it is impossible to deny that Plato's ideas do often seem unpractical and impracticable, and especially when one views them in connection with the life of a great work-a-day world like the United States. The necessary staple of the life of such a world Plato regards with disdain; handicraft and trade and the working professions he regards with disdain; but what becomes of the life of an industrial modern community if you take handicraft and trade and the working professions out of it? The base mechanic arts and handicrafts, says Plato, bring about a natural weakness in the principle of excellence in a man, so that he cannot govern the ignoble growths in him, but nurses them, and cannot understand fostering any other. Those who exercise such arts and trades, as they have their bodies, he says, marred, by their vulgar businesses, so they have their souls, too, bowed and broken by them. And if one of these uncomely people has a mind to seek self-culture and philosophy, Plato compares him to a bald little tinker, who has scraped together money, and has got his release from service, and has had a bath, and bought a new coat, and is rigged out like a bridegroom about to marry the daughter of his master who has fallen into poor and helpless estate.

Nor do the working professions fare any better than trade at the hands of Plato. He draws for us an inimitable picture of the working lawyer, and of his life of bondage; he shows how this bondage from his youth up has stunted and warped him, and made him small and crooked of soul, encompassing him with difficulties which he is not man enough to rely on justice and truth as means to encounter, but has recourse, for help out of them, to falsehood and wrong. And so, says Plato, this poor creature is bent and broken, and grows up from boy to man without a particle of soundness in him, although exceedingly smart and clever in his own esteem.

One cannot refuse to admire the artist who draws these pictures. But we say to ourselves that his ideas show the influence of a primitive and obsolete order

[1] This paper was repeatedly read by Arnold during his visit to America in 1883-84 and represents a recasting of a lecture originally given at the University of Cambridge.

of things, when the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone in honor, and the humble work of the world was done by slaves. We have now changed all that; the modern majority consists in work, as Emerson declares; and in work, we may add, principally of such plain and dusty kind as the work of cultivators of the ground, handicraftsmen, men of trade and business, men of the working professions. Above all is this true in a great industrious community such as that of the United States.

Now education, many people go on to say, is still mainly governed by the ideas of men like Plato, who lived when the warrior caste and the priestly or philosophical class were alone in honor, and the really useful part of the community were slaves. It is an education fitted for persons of leisure in such a community. This education passed from Greece and Rome to the feudal communities of Europe, where also the warrior caste and the priestly caste were alone held in honor, and where the really useful and working part of the community, though not nominally slaves as in the pagan world, were practically not much better off than slaves, and not more seriously regarded. And how absurd it is, people end by saying, to inflict this education upon an industrious modern community, where very few indeed are persons of leisure, and the mass to be considered has not leisure, but is bound, for its own great good, and for the great good of the world at large, to plain labor and to industrial pursuits, and the education in question tends necessarily to make men dissatisfied with these pursuits and unfitted for them!

That is what is said. So far I must defend Plato, as to plead that his view of education and studies is in the general, as it seems to me, sound enough, and fitted for all sorts and conditions of men, whatever their pursuits may be. "An intelligent man," says Plato, "will prize those studies which result in his soul getting soberness, righteousness, and wisdom, and will less value the others." I cannot consider *that* a bad description of the aim of education, and of the motives which should govern us in the choice of studies, whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary seat in the English House of Lords or for the pork trade in Chicago.

Still I admit that Plato's world was not ours, that his scorn of trade and handicraft is fantastic, that he had no conception of a great industrial community such as that of the United States, and that such a community must and will shape its education to suit its own needs. If the usual education handed down to it from the past does not suit it, it will certainly before long drop this and try another. The usual education in the past has been mainly literary. The question is whether the studies which were long supposed to be the best for all of us are practically the best now; whether others are not better. The tyranny of the past, many think, weighs on us injuriously in the predominance given to letters in education. The question is raised whether, to meet the needs of our modern life, the predominance ought not now to pass from letters to science; and naturally the question is nowhere raised with more energy than here in the United States. The design of abasing what is called "mere literary instruction and education," and of exalting what is called "sound, extensive, and practical scientific knowledge," is, in this intensely modern world of the United States, even more perhaps than in Europe, a very popular design, and makes great and rapid progress.

I am going to ask whether the present movement for ousting letters from their old predominance in education, and for

transferring the predominance in education to the natural sciences, whether this brisk and flourishing movement ought to prevail, and whether it is likely that in the end it really will prevail. An objection may be raised which I will anticipate. My own studies have been almost wholly in letters, and my visits to the field of the natural sciences have been very slight and inadequate, although those sciences have always strongly moved my curiosity. A man of letters, it will perhaps be said, is not competent to discuss the comparative merits of letters and natural science as means of education. To this objection I reply, first of all, that his incompetence, if he attempts the discussion but is really incompetent for it, will be abundantly visible; nobody will be taken in; he will have plenty of sharp observers and critics to save mankind from that danger. But the line I am going to follow is, as you will soon discover, so extremely simple, that perhaps it may be followed without failure even by one who for a more ambitious line of discussion would be quite incompetent.

Some of you may possibly remember a phrase of mine which has been the object of a good deal of comment; an observation to the effect that in our culture, the aim being *to know ourselves and the world,* we have, as the means to this end, *to know the best which has been thought and said in the world.* A man of science, who is also an excellent writer and the very prince of debaters, Professor Huxley,[1] in a discourse at the opening of Sir Josiah Mason's college at Birmingham, laying hold of this phrase, expanded it by quoting some more words of mine, which are these: "The civilized world is to be regarded as now being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have for their proper outfit a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special local and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this program."

Now on my phrase, thus enlarged, Professor Huxley remarks that when I speak of the above-mentioned knowledge as enabling us to know ourselves and the world, I assert *literature* to contain the materials which suffice for thus making us know ourselves and the world. But it is not by any means clear, says he, that after having learnt all which ancient and modern literatures have to tell us, we have laid a sufficiently broad and deep foundation for that criticism of life, that knowledge of ourselves and the world, which constitutes culture. On the contrary, Professor Huxley declares that he finds himself "wholly unable to admit that either nations or individuals will really advance, if their outfit draws nothing from the stores of physical science. An army without weapons of precision, and with no particular base of operations, might more hopefully enter upon a campaign on the Rhine, than a man, devoid of a knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, upon a criticism of life."

This shows how needful it is for those who are to discuss any matter together, to have a common understanding as to the sense of the terms they employ,—how needful, and how difficult. What Professor Huxley says, implies just the reproach which is so often brought against the study of *belles lettres,* as they are called: that the study is an elegant one, but slight and ineffectual; a smattering of Greek and Latin and other ornamental things, of little use for any one

[1] Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), celebrated biologist and writer on scientific subjects.

whose object is to get at truth, and to be a practical man. So, too, M. Renan[1] talks of the "superficial humanism" of a school-course which treats us as if we were all going to be poets, writers, preachers, orators, and he opposes this humanism to positive science, or the critical search after truth. And there is always a tendency in those who are remonstrating against the predominance of letters in education, to understand by letters *belles lettres*, and by *belles lettres* a superficial humanism, the opposite of science or true knowledge.

But when we talk of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, for instance, which is the knowledge people have called the humanities, I for my part mean a knowledge which is something more than a superficial humanism, mainly decorative. "I call all teaching *scientific*," says Wolf,[2] the critic of Homer, "which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources. For example: a knowledge of classical antiquity is scientific when the remains of classical antiquity are correctly studied in the original languages." There can be no doubt that Wolf is perfectly right; that all learning is scientific which is systematically laid out and followed up to its original sources, and that a genuine humanism is scientific.

When I speak of knowing Greek and Roman antiquity, therefore, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, I mean more than a knowledge of so much vocabulary, so much grammar, so many portions of authors in the Greek and Latin languages, I mean knowing the Greeks and Romans, and their life and genius, and what they were and did in the world; what we get from them, and what is its value. That, at least, is the ideal; and when we talk of endeavoring to know Greek and Roman antiquity, as a help to knowing ourselves and the world, we mean endeavoring so to know them as to satisfy this ideal, however much we may still fall short of it.

The same also as to knowing our own and other modern nations, with the like aim of getting to understand ourselves and the world. To know the best that has been thought and said by the modern nations, is to know, says Professor Huxley, "only what modern *literatures* have to tell us; it is the criticism of life contained in modern literature." And yet "the distinctive character of our times," he urges, "lies in the vast and constantly increasing part which is played by natural knowledge." And how, therefore, can a man, devoid of knowledge of what physical science has done in the last century, enter hopefully upon a criticism of modern life?

Let us, I say, be agreed about the meaning of the terms we are using. I talk of knowing the best which has been thought and uttered in the world; Professor Huxley says this means knowing *literature*. Literature is a large word; it may mean everything written with letters or printed in a book. Euclid's *Elements* and Newton's *Principia* are thus literature. All knowledge that reaches us through books is literature. But by literature Professor Huxley means *belles lettres*. He means to make me say, that knowing the best which has been thought and said by the modern nations is knowing their *belles lettres* and no more. And this is no sufficient equipment, he argues, for a criticism of modern life. But as I do not mean, by knowing ancient Rome, knowing merely more or less of Latin *belles lettres*, and taking no account of Rome's military, and political, and legal, and administrative work in the world; and as, by knowing ancient Greece, I

[1] Ernest Renan (1823-1892), celebrated French philologist and man of letters.

[2] Friedrich August Wolf (1759-1824), German scholar, called the founder of classical philology.

understand knowing her as the giver of Greek art, and the guide to a free and right use of reason and to scientific method, and the founder of our mathematics and physics and astronomy and biology,—I understand knowing her as all this, and not merely knowing certain Greek poems, and histories, and treatises, and speeches,—so as to the knowledge of modern nations also. By knowing modern nations, I mean not merely knowing their *belles lettres,* but knowing also what has been done by such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin. "Our ancestors learned," says Professor Huxley, "that the earth is the center of the visible universe, and that man is the cynosure of things terrestrial; and more especially was it inculcated that the course of nature had no fixed order, but that it could be, and constantly was, altered." But for us now, continues Professor Huxley, "the notions of the beginning and the end of the world entertained by our forefathers are no longer credible. It is very certain that the earth is not the chief body in the material universe, and that the world is not subordinated to man's use. It is even more certain that nature is the expression of a definite order, with which nothing interferes." "And yet," he cries, "the purely classical education advocated by the representatives of the humanists in our day gives no inkling of all this!"

In due place and time I will just touch upon that vexed question of classical education; but at present the question is as to what is meant by knowing the best which modern nations have thought and said. It is not knowing their *belles lettres* merely which is meant. To know Italian *belles lettres* is not to know Italy, and to know English *belles lettres* is not to know England. Into knowing Italy and England there comes a great deal more, Galileo and Newton amongst it. The reproach of being a superficial humanism, a tincture of *belles lettres,* may attach rightly enough to some other disciplines; but to the particular discipline recommended when I proposed knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world, it does not apply. In that best I certainly include what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature.

There is, therefore, really no question between Professor Huxley and me as to whether knowing the great results of the modern scientific study of nature is not required as a part of our culture, as well as knowing the products of literature and art. But to follow the processes by which those results are reached, ought, say the friends of physical science, to be made the staple of education for the bulk of mankind. And here there does arise a question between those whom Professor Huxley calls with playful sarcasm "the Levites of culture," and those whom the poor humanist is sometimes apt to regard as its Nebuchadnezzars.

The great results of the scientific investigation of nature we are agreed upon knowing, but how much of our study are we bound to give to the processes by which those results are reached? The results have their visible bearing on human life. But all the processes, too, all the items of fact, by which those results are reached and established, are interesting. All knowledge is interesting to a wise man, and the knowledge of nature is interesting to all men. It is very interesting to know, that, from the albuminous white of the egg, the chick in the egg gets the materials for its flesh, bones, blood, and feathers; while, from the fatty yolk of the egg, it gets the heat and energy which enable it at length to break its shell and begin the world. It is less interesting, perhaps, but still it is interesting, to know that when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid

and water. Moreover, it is quite true that the habit of dealing with facts, which is given by the study of nature, is, as the friends of physical science praise it for being, an excellent discipline. The appeal, in the study of nature, is constantly to observation and experiment; not only is it said that the thing is so, but we can be made to see that it is so. Not only does a man tell us that when a taper burns the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, as a man may tell us, if he likes, that Charon is punting his ferry-boat on the river Styx, or that Victor Hugo is a sublime poet, or Mr. Gladstone the most admirable of statesmen; but we are made to see that the conversion into carbonic acid and water does actually happen. This reality of natural knowledge it is, which makes the friends of physical science contrast it, as a knowledge of things, with the humanist's knowledge, which is, they say, a knowledge of words. And hence Professor Huxley is moved to lay it down that, "for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education." And a certain President of the Section for Mechanical Science in the British Association is, in Scripture phrase, "very bold," and declares that if a man, in his mental training, "has substituted literature and history for natural science, he has chosen the less useful alternative." But whether we go these lengths or not, we must all admit that in natural science the habit gained of dealing with facts is a most valuable discipline, and that every one should have some experience of it.

More than this, however, is demanded by the reformers. It is proposed to make the training in natural science the main part of education, for the great majority of mankind at any rate. And here, I confess, I part company with the friends of physical science, with whom up to this point I have been agreeing. In differing from them, however, I wish to proceed with the utmost caution and diffidence. The smallness of my own acquaintance with the disciplines of natural science is ever before my mind, and I am fearful of doing these disciplines an injustice. The ability and pugnacity of the partisans of natural science make them formidable persons to contradict. The tone of tentative inquiry, which befits a being of dim faculties and bounded knowledge, is the tone I would wish to take and not to depart from. At present it seems to me, that those who are for giving to natural knowledge, as they call it, the chief place in the education of the majority of mankind, leave one important thing out of their account: the constitution of human nature. But I put this forward on the strength of some facts not at all recondite, very far from it; facts capable of being stated in the simplest possible fashion, and to which, if I so state them, the man of science will, I am sure, be willing to allow their due weight.

Deny the facts altogether, I think, he hardly can. He can hardly deny, that when we set ourselves to enumerate the powers which go to the building up of human life, and say that they are the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners,—he can hardly deny that this scheme, though drawn in rough and plain lines enough, and not pretending to scientific exactness, does yet give a fairly true representation of the matter. Human nature is built up by these powers; we have the need for them all. When we have rightly met and adjusted the claims of them all, we shall then be in a fair way for getting soberness and righteousness, with wisdom. This is evident enough, and the friends of physical science would admit it.

But perhaps they may not have sufficiently observed another thing: namely, that the several powers just mentioned are not isolated, but there is, in the generality of mankind, a perpetual tendency to relate them one to another in divers ways. With one such way of relating them I am particularly concerned now. Following our instinct for intellect and knowledge, we acquire pieces of knowledge; and presently, in the generality of men, there arises the desire to relate these pieces of knowledge to our sense for conduct, to our sense for beauty,—and there is weariness and dissatisfaction if the desire is balked. Now in this desire lies, I think, the strength of that hold which letters have upon us.

All knowledge is, as I said just now, interesting; and even items of knowledge which from the nature of the case cannot well be related, but must stand isolated n our thoughts, have their interest. Even lists of exceptions have their interest. If we are studying Greek accents, it is interesting to know that *pais* and *pas,* and some other monosyllables of the same form of declension, do not take the circumflex upon the last syllable of the genitive plural, but vary, in this respect, from the common rule. If we are studying physiology, it is interesting to know that the pulmonary artery carries dark blood and the pulmonary vein carries bright blood, departing in this respect from the common rule for the division of labor between the veins and the arteries. But every one knows how we seek naturally to combine the pieces of our knowledge together, to bring them under general rules, to relate them to principles; and how unsatisfactory and tiresome it would be to go on forever learning lists of exceptions, or accumulating items of fact which must stand isolated.

Well, that same need of relating our knowledge, which operates here within the sphere of our knowledge itself, we shall find operating, also, outside that sphere. We experience, as we go on learning and knowing,—the vast majority of us experience,—the need of relating what we have learnt and known to the sense which we have in us for conduct, to the sense which we have in us for beauty.

A certain Greek prophetess of Mantineia in Arcadia, Diotima by name, once explained to the philosopher Socrates that love, and impulse, and bent of all kinds, is, in fact, nothing else but the desire in men that good should forever be present to them. This desire for good, Diotima assured Socrates, is our fundamental desire, of which fundamental desire every impulse in us is only some one particular form. And therefore this fundamental desire it is, I suppose,—this desire in men that good should be forever present to them,—which acts in us when we feel the impulse for relating our knowledge to our sense for conduct and to our sense for beauty. At any rate, with men in general the instinct exists. Such is human nature. And the instinct, it will be admitted, is innocent, and human nature is preserved by our following the lead of its innocent instincts. Therefore, in seeking to gratify this instinct in question, we are following the instinct of self-preservation in humanity.

But, no doubt, some kinds of knowledge cannot be made to directly serve the instinct in question, cannot be directly related to the sense for beauty, to the sense for conduct. These are instrument-knowledges; they lead on to other knowledges, which can. A man who passes his life in instrument-knowledges is a specialist. They may be invaluable as instruments to something beyond, for those who have the gift thus to employ them; and they may be disciplines in themselves wherein it is useful for every one to have

some schooling. But it is inconceivable that the generality of men should pass all their mental life with Greek accents or with formal logic. My friend Professor Sylvester, who is one of the first mathematicians in the world, holds transcendental doctrines as to the virtue of mathematics, but those doctrines are not for common men. In the very Senate House and heart of our English Cambridge I once ventured, though not without an apology for my profaneness, to hazard the opinion that for the majority of mankind a little of mathematics, even, goes a long way. Of course this is quite consistent with their being of immense importance as an instrument to something else; but it is the few who have the aptitude for thus using them, not the bulk of mankind.

The natural sciences do not, however, stand on the same footing with these instrument-knowledges. Experience shows us that the generality of men will find more interest in learning that, when a taper burns, the wax is converted into carbonic acid and water, or in learning the explanation of the phenomenon of dew, or in learning how the circulation of the blood is carried on, than they find in learning that the genitive plural of *pais* and *pas* does not take the circumflex on the termination. And one piece of natural knowledge is added to another, and others are added to that, and at last we come to propositions so interesting as Mr. Darwin's famous proposition that "our ancestor was a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits." Or we come to propositions of such reach and magnitude as those which Professor Huxley delivers, when he says that the notions of our forefathers about the beginning and the end of the world were all wrong, and that nature is the expression of a definite order with which nothing interferes.

Interesting, indeed, these results of science are, important they are, and we should all of us be acquainted with them. But what I now wish you to mark is, that we are still, when they are propounded to us and we receive them, we are still in the sphere of intellect and knowledge. And for the generality of men there will be found, I say, to arise, when they have duly taken in the proposition that their ancestor was "a hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," there will be found to arise an invincible desire to relate this proposition to the sense in us for conduct, and to the sense in us for beauty. But this the men of science will not do for us, and will hardly even profess to do. They will give us other pieces of knowledge, other facts, about other animals and their ancestors, or about plants, or about stones, or about stars; and they may finally bring us to those great "general conceptions of the universe, which are forced upon us all," says Professor Huxley, "by the progress of physical science." But still it will be *knowledge* only which they give us; knowledge not put for us into relation with our sense for conduct, our sense for beauty, and touched with emotion by being so put; not thus put for us, and therefore, to the majority of mankind, after a certain while, unsatisfying, wearying.

Not to the born naturalist, I admit. But what do we mean by a born naturalist? We mean a man in whom the zeal for observing nature is so uncommonly strong and eminent, that it marks him off from the bulk of mankind. Such a man will pass his life happily in collecting natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and will ask for nothing, or hardly anything, more. I have heard it said that the sagacious and admirable naturalist whom we lost not very long ago, Mr.

Darwin, once owned to a friend that for his part he did not experience the necessity for two things which most men find so necessary to them,—religion and poetry; science and the domestic affections, he thought, were enough. To a born naturalist, I can well understand that this should seem so. So absorbing is his occupation with nature, so strong his love for his occupation, that he goes on acquiring natural knowledge and reasoning upon it, and has little time or inclination for thinking about getting it related to the desire in man for conduct, the desire in man for beauty. He relates it to them for himself as he goes along, so far as he feels the need; and he draws from the domestic affections all the additional solace necessary. But then Darwins are extremely rare. Another great and admirable master of natural knowledge, Faraday, was a Sandemanian. That is to say, he related his knowledge to his instinct for conduct and to his instinct for beauty, by the aid of that respectable Scottish sectary, Robert Sandeman. And so strong, in general, is the demand of religion and poetry to have their share in a man, to associate themselves with his knowing, and to relieve and rejoice it, that, probably, for one man amongst us with the disposition to do as Darwin did in this respect, there are at least fifty with the disposition to do as Faraday.

Education lays hold upon us, in fact, by satisfying this demand. Professor Huxley holds up to scorn mediæval education, with its neglect of the knowledge of nature, its poverty even of literary studies, its formal logic devoted to "showing how and why that which the Church said was true must be true." But the great mediæval Universities were not brought into being, we may be sure, by the zeal for giving a jejune and contemptible education. Kings have been their nursing fathers, and queens have been their nursing mothers, but not for this The mediæval Universities came into being, because the supposed knowledge, delivered by Scripture and the Church, so deeply engaged men's hearts, by so simply, easily, and powerfully relating itself to their desire for conduct, their desire for beauty. All other knowledge was dominated by this supposed knowledge and was subordinated to it, because of the surpassing strength of the hold which it gained upon the affections of men, by allying itself profoundly with their sense for conduct, their sense for beauty.

But now, says Professor Huxley, conceptions of the universe fatal to the notions held by our forefathers have been forced upon us by physical science. Grant to him that they are thus fatal, that the new conceptions must and will soon become current everywhere, and that every one will finally perceive them to be fatal to the beliefs of our forefathers. The need of humane letters, as they are truly called, because they serve the paramount desire in men that good should be forever present to them,—the need of humane letters, to establish a relation between the new conceptions, and our instinct for beauty, our instinct for conduct, is only the more visible. The Middle Age could do without humane letters, as it could do without the study of nature, because its supposed knowledge was made to engage its emotions so powerfully. Grant that the supposed knowledge disappears, its power of being made to engage the emotions will of course disappear along with it,—but the emotions themselves, and their claim to be engaged and satisfied, will remain. Now if we find by experience that humane letters have an undeniable power of engaging the emotions, the importance of humane letters in a man's training becomes not less, but greater, in proportion to the success of modern science in extir-

pating what it calls "mediæval thinking."

Have humane letters, then, have poetry and eloquence, the power here attributed to them of engaging the emotions, and do they exercise it? And if they have it and exercise it, *how* do they exercise it, so as to exert an influence upon man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? Finally, even if they both can and do exert an influence upon the senses in question, how are they to relate to them the results,—the modern results,—of natural science? All these questions may be asked. First, have poetry and eloquence the power of calling out the emotions? The appeal is to experience. Experience shows that for the vast majority of men, for mankind in general, they have the power. Next, do they exercise it? They do. But then, *how* do they exercise it so as to affect man's sense for conduct, his sense for beauty? And this is perhaps a case for applying the Preacher's words: "Though a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, farther, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it."[1] Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say, "Patience is a virtue," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with Homer,

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν—[2]

"for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men"? Why should it be one thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the philosopher Spinoza,[3] *Felicitas in eo consistit quod homo suum esse conservare potest*—"Man's happiness consists in his being able to preserve his own essence," and quite another thing, in its effect upon the emotions, to say with the Gospel, "What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, forfeit himself?" How does this difference of effect arise? I cannot tell, and I am not much concerned to know; the important thing is that it does arise, and that we can profit by it. But how, finally, are poetry and eloquence to exercise the power of relating the modern results of natural science to man's instinct for conduct, his instinct for beauty? And here again I answer that I do not know *how* they will exercise it, but that they can and will exercise it I am sure. I do not mean that modern philosophical poets and modern philosophical moralists are to come and relate for us, in express terms, the results of modern scientific research to our instinct for conduct, our instinct for beauty. But I mean that we shall find, as a matter of experience, if we know the best that has been thought and uttered in the world, we shall find that the art and poetry and eloquence of men who lived, perhaps, long ago, who had the most limited natural knowledge, who had the most erroneous conceptions about many important matters, we shall find that this art, and poetry, and eloquence, have in fact not only the power of refreshing and delighting us, they have also the power,—such is the strength and worth, in essentials, of their authors' criticism of life,—they have a fortifying, and elevating, and quickening, and suggestive power, capable of wonderfully helping us to relate the results of modern science to our need for conduct, our need for beauty. Homer's conceptions of the physical universe were, I imagine, grotesque; but really, under the shock of hearing from modern science that "the world is not subordinated to man's use, and that man is not the cynosure of things terrestrial," I could, for my own part, desire no better comfort than Homer's line which I quoted just now.

[1] *Ecclesiastes*, VIII. 17.
[2] *Iliad*, XXIV. 49.
[3] Philosopher (1632-1677), born in Holland.

τλητὸν γὰρ Μοῖραι θυμὸν θέσαν ἀνθρώποισιν—

"for an enduring heart have the destinies appointed to the children of men!"

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are,—the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points;—so much the more will the value of humane letters, and of art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured.

Let us therefore, all of us, avoid indeed as much as possible any invidious comparison between the merits of humane letters, as means of education, and the merits of the natural sciences. But when some President of a Section for Mechanical Science insists on making the comparison, and tells us that "he who in his training has substituted literature and history for natural science has chosen the less useful alternative," let us make answer to him that the student of humane letters only, will, at least, know also the great general conceptions brought in by modern physical science; for science, as Professor Huxley says, forces them upon us all. But the student of the natural sciences only, will, by our very hypothesis, know nothing of humane letters; not to mention that in setting himself to be perpetually accumulating natural knowledge, he sets himself to do what only specialists have in general the gift for doing genially. And so he will probably be unsatisfied, or at any rate incomplete, and even more incomplete than the student of humane letters only.

I once mentioned in a school-report, how a young man in one of our English training colleges having to paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning,

"Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

turned this line into, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" And I remarked what a curious state of things it would be, if every pupil of our national schools knew, let us say, that the moon is two thousand one hundred and sixty miles in diameter, and thought at the same time that a good paraphrase for

"Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?"

was, "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" If one is driven to choose, I think I would rather have a young person ignorant about the moon's diameter, but aware that "Can you not wait upon the lunatic?" is bad, than a young person whose education had been such as to manage things the other way.

Or to go higher than the pupils of our national schools. I have in my mind's eye a member of our British Parliament who comes to travel here in America, who afterwards relates his travels, and who shows a really masterly knowledge of the geology of this great country and of its mining capabilities, but who ends by gravely suggesting that the United States should borrow a prince from our Royal Family, and should make him their king, and should create a House of Lords of great landed proprietors after the pattern of ours; and then America, he thinks, would have her future happily and perfectly secured. Surely, in this case, the President of the Section for Mechanical Science would himself hardly say that our member of Parliament, by concentrating himself upon geology and mineralogy, and so on, and not attending to literature and history, had "chosen the more useful alternative."

If then there is to be separation and option between humane letters on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other, the great majority of mankind, all who have not exceptional and overpower-

ing aptitudes for the study of nature, would do well, I cannot but think, to choose to be educated in humane letters rather than in the natural sciences. Letters will call out their being at more points, will make them live more.

I said that before I ended I would just touch on the question of classical education, and I will keep my word. Even if literature is to retain a large place in our education, yet Latin and Greek, say the friends of progress, will certainly have to go. Greek is the grand offender in the eyes of these gentlemen. The attackers of the established course of study think that against Greek, at any rate, they have irresistible arguments. Literature may perhaps be needed in education, they say; but why on earth should it be Greek literature? Why not French or German? Nay, "has not an Englishman models in his own literature of every kind of excellence?" As before, it is not on any weak pleadings of my own that I rely for convincing the gainsayers; it is on the constitution of human nature itself, and on the instinct of self-preservation in humanity. The instinct for beauty is set in human nature, as surely as the instinct for knowledge is set there, or the instinct for conduct. If the instinct for beauty is served by Greek literature and art as it is served by no other literature and art, we may trust to the instinct of self-preservation in humanity for keeping Greek as part of our culture. We may trust to it for even making the study of Greek more prevalent than it is now. Greek will come, I hope, some day to be studied more rationally than at present; but it will be increasingly studied as men increasingly feel the need in them for beauty, and how powerfully Greek art and Greek literature can serve this need. Women will again study Greek, as Lady Jane Grey did; I believe that in that chain of forts, with which the fair host of the Amazons are now engirdling our English universities, I find that here in America, in colleges like Smith College in Massachusetts, and Vassar College in the State of New York, and in the happy families of the mixed universities out West, they are studying it already.

Defuit una mihi symmetria prisca,—"The antique symmetry was the one thing wanting to me," said Leonardo da Vinci; [1] and he was an Italian. I will not presume to speak for the Americans, but I am sure that, in the Englishman, the want of this admirable symmetry of the Greeks is a thousand times more great and crying than in any Italian. The results of the want show themselves most glaringly, perhaps, in our architecture, but they show themselves, also, in all our art. *Fit details strictly combined, in view of a large general result nobly conceived;* that is just the beautiful *symmetria prisca* of the Greeks, and it is just where we English fail, where all our art fails. Striking ideas we have, and well-executed details we have; but that high symmetry which, with satisfying and delightful effect, combines them, we seldom or never have. The glorious beauty of the Acropolis at Athens did not come from single fine things stuck about on that hill, a statue here, a gateway there; —no, it arose from all things being perfectly combined for a supreme total effect. What must not an Englishman feel about our deficiencies in this respect, as the sense for beauty, whereof this symmetry is an essential element, awakens and strengthens within him! what will not one day be his respect and desire for Greece and its *symmetria prisca,* when the scales drop from his eyes as he walks the London streets, and he sees such a lesson in meanness as the Strand, for in-

[1] Famous Italian painter, architect, and sculptor (1452-1519).

stance, in its true deformity! But here we are coming to our friend Mr. Ruskin's province, and I will not intrude upon it, for he is its very sufficient guardian.

And so we at last find, it seems, we find flowing in favor of the humanities the natural and necessary stream of things, which seemed against them when we started. The "hairy quadruped furnished with a tail and pointed ears, probably arboreal in his habits," this good fellow carried hidden in his nature, apparently, something destined to develop into a necessity for humane letters. Nay, more; we seem finally to be even led to the further conclusion that our hairy ancestor carried in his nature, also, a necessity for Greek.

And therefore, to say the truth, I cannot really think that humane letters are in much actual danger of being thrust out from their leading place in education, in spite of the array of authorities against them at this moment. So long as human nature is what it is, their attractions will remain irresistible. As with Greek, so with letters generally: they will some day come, we may hope, to be studied more rationally, but they will not lose their place. What will happen will rather be that there will be crowded into education other matters besides, far too many; there will be, perhaps, a period of unsettlement and confusion and false tendency; but letters will not in the end lose their leading place. If they lose it for a time, they will get it back again. We shall be brought back to them by our wants and aspirations. And a poor humanist may possess his soul in patience, neither strive nor cry, admit the energy and brilliancy of the partisans of physical science, and their present favor with the public, to be far greater than his own, and still have a happy faith that the nature of things works silently on behalf of the studies which he loves, and that, while we shall all have to acquaint ourselves with the great results reached by modern science, and to give ourselves as much training in its disciplines as we can conveniently carry, yet the majority of men will always require humane letters; and so much the more, as they have the more and the greater results of science to relate to the need in man for conduct, and to the need in him for beauty.

WALTER PATER (1839–1894)

POSTSCRIPT [1]

αἶνει δὲ παλαιὸν μὲν οἶνον, ἄνθεα δ' ὕμνων νεωτέρων[2]

The words, *classical* and *romantic*, although, like many other critical expressions, sometimes abused by those who have understood them too vaguely or too absolutely, yet define two real tendencies in the history of art and literature. Used in an exaggerated sense, to express a greater opposition between those tendencies than really exists, they have at times tended to divide people of taste into opposite camps. But in that *House Beautiful*, which the creative minds of all generations—the artists and those who have treated life in the spirit of art—are always building together, for the refreshment of the human spirit, these oppositions cease; and the *Interpreter* of the *House Beautiful*, the true æsthetic critic, uses these divisions, only so far as they enable him to enter into the peculiarities of the objects with which he has to do. The term *classical*, fixed, as it is, to a well-defined literature, and a well-defined group in art, is clear indeed; but then it has often been used in a hard, and merely scholastic sense, by the praisers of what is old and accustomed, at the expense of what is new, by critics who

[1] This is the last essay in his volume called *Appreciations* (1889).

[2] Praise old wine and the flowers of newer song.

would never have discovered for themselves the charm of any work, whether new or old, who value what is old, in art or literature, for its accessories, and chiefly for the conventional authority that has gathered about it—people who would never really have been made glad by any Venus fresh-risen from the sea, and who praise the Venus of old Greece and Rome, only because they fancy her grown now into something staid and tame.

And as the term, *classical*, has been used in a too absolute, and therefore in a misleading sense, so the term, *romantic*, has been used much too vaguely, in various accidental senses. The sense in which Scott is called a romantic writer is chiefly this; that, in opposition to the literary tradition of the last century, he loved strange adventure, and sought it in the Middle Age. Much later, in a Yorkshire village, the spirit of romanticism bore a more really characteristic fruit in the work of a young girl, Emily Brontë, the romance of *Wuthering Heights;* the figures of Hareton Earnshaw, of Catherine Linton, and of Heathcliffe—tearing open Catherine's grave, removing one side of her coffin, that he may really lie beside her in death—figures so passionate, yet woven on a background of delicately beautiful, moorland scenery, being typical examples of that spirit. In Germany, again, that spirit is shown less in Tieck,[1] its professional representative, than in Meinhold,[2] the author of *Sidonia the Sorceress* and the *Amber-Witch*. In Germany and France, within the last hundred years, the term has been used to describe a particular school of writers; and, consequently, when Heine criticises the *Romantic School* in Germany—that movement which culminated in Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen;* or when Théophile Gautier[3] criticises the romantic movement in France, where, indeed, it bore its most characteristic fruits, and its play is hardly yet over, where, by a certain audacity, or *bizarrerie* of motive, united with faultless literary execution, it still shows itself in imaginative literature, they use the word, with an exact sense of special artistic qualities, indeed; but use it, nevertheless, with a limited application to the manifestation of those qualities at a particular period. But the romantic spirit is, in reality, an ever-present, an enduring principle, in the artistic temperament; and the qualities of thought and style which that, and other similar uses of the word *romantic* really indicate, are indeed but symptoms of a very continuous and widely working influence.

Though the words *classical* and *romantic*, then, have acquired an almost technical meaning, in application to certain developments of German and French taste, yet this is but one variation of an old opposition, which may be traced from the very beginning of the formation of European art and literature. From the first formation of anything like a standard of taste in these things, the restless curiosity of their more eager lovers necessarily made itself felt, in the craving for new motives, new subjects of interest, new modifications of style. Hence, the opposition between the classicists and the romanticists—between the adherents, in the culture of beauty, of the principles of liberty, and authority, respectively—of strength and order, or what the Greeks called κοσμιότης.

Sainte-Beuve,[4] in the third volume of the *Causeries du Lundi*, has discussed the question, *What is meant by a classic?* It was a question he was well fitted to answer, having himself lived through

[1] Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853), German poet and critic.

[2] Johannes Wilhelm Meinhold (1797-1851), German writer.

[3] Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), French poet, critic, and novelist.

[4] Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), French critic.

many phases of taste, and having been in earlier life an enthusiastic member of the romantic school: he was also a great master of that sort of "philosophy of literature," which delights in tracing traditions in it, and the way in which various phases of thought and sentiment maintain themselves, through successive modifications, from epoch to epoch. His aim, then, is to give the word *classic* a wider, and as he says, a more generous sense than it commonly bears, to make it expressly *grandiose et flottant;* and, in doing this, he develops, in a masterly manner, those qualities of measure, purity, temperance, of which it is the especial function of classical art and literature, whatever meaning, narrower or wider, we attach to the term, to take care.

The charm, therefore, of what is classical, in art or literature, is that of the well-known tale, to which we can, nevertheless, listen over and over again, because it is told so well. To the absolute beauty of its artistic form, is added the accidental, tranquil, charm of familiarity. There are times, indeed, at which these charms fail to work on our spirits at all, because they fail to excite us. *"Romanticism,"* says Stendhal,[1] "is the art of presenting to people the literary works which, in the actual state of their habits and beliefs, are capable of giving them the greatest possible pleasure; *classicism,* on the contrary, of presenting them with that which gave the greatest possible pleasure to their grandfathers." But then, beneath all changes of habits and beliefs, our love of that mere abstract proportion—of music—which what is classical in literature possesses, still maintains itself in the best of us, and what pleased our grandparents may at least tranquillize us. The "classic" comes to us out of the cool and quiet of other times, as the measure of what a long experience has shown will at least never displease us. And in the classical literature of Greece and Rome, as in the classics of the last century, the essentially classical element is that quality of order in beauty, which they possess, indeed, in a preëminent degree, and which impresses some minds to the exclusion of everything else in them.

It is the addition of strangeness to beauty that constitutes the romantic character in art; and the desire of beauty being a fixed element in every artistic organization, it is the addition of curiosity to this desire of beauty, that constitutes the romantic temper. Curiosity and the desire of beauty, have each their place in art, as in all true criticism. When one's curiosity is deficient, when one is not eager enough for new impressions, and new pleasures, one is liable to value mere academical proprieties too highly, to be satisfied with worn-out or conventional types, with the insipid ornament of Racine, or the prettiness of that later Greek sculpture, which passed so long for true Hellenic work; to miss those places where the handiwork of nature, or of the artist, has been most cunning; to find the most stimulating products of art a mere irritation. And when one's curiosity is in excess, when it overbalances the desire of beauty, then one is liable to value in works of art what is inartistic in them; to be satisfied with what is exaggerated in art, with productions like some of those of the romantic school in Germany; not to distinguish, jealously enough, between what is admirably done, and what is done not quite so well, in the writings, for instance, of Jean Paul.[2] And if I had to give instances of these defects, then I should say, that Pope, in common with the age of literature to which he belonged, had too little curiosity, so that

[1] De Stendhal (*i.e.,* Marie Henri Beyle, 1783-1842), French critic and novelist.

[2] Jean Paul Friedrich Richter (1763-1825), German humorist and critic.

there is always a certain insipidity in the effect of his work, exquisite as it is; and, coming down to our own time, that Balzac had an excess of curiosity—curiosity not duly tempered with the desire of beauty.

But, however falsely those two tendencies may be opposed by critics, or exaggerated by artists themselves, they are tendencies really at work at all times in art, moulding it, with the balance sometimes a little on one side, sometimes a little on the other, generating, respectively, as the balance inclines on this side or that, two principles, two traditions, in art, and in literature so far as it partakes of the spirit of art. If there is a great over-balance of curiosity, then, we have the grotesque in art; if the union of strangeness and beauty, under very difficult and complex conditions, be a successful one, if the union be entire, then the resultant beauty is very exquisite, very attractive. With a passionate care for beauty, the romantic spirit refused to have it, unless the condition of strangeness be first fulfilled. Its desire is for a beauty born of unlikely elements, by a profound alchemy, by a difficult initiation, by the charm which wrings it even out of terrible things; and a trace of distortion, of the grotesque, may perhaps linger, as an additional element of expression, about its ultimate grace. Its eager, excited spirit will have strength, the grotesque, first of all—the trees shrieking as you tear off the leaves; for Jean Valjean,[1] the long years of convict life; for Redgauntlet, the quicksands of Solway Moss; then, incorporate with this strangeness, and intensified by restraint, as much sweetness, as much beauty, as is compatible with that. *Énergique, frais, et dispos*—these, according to Sainte-Beuve, are the characteristics of a genuine classic—*les ouvrages anciens ne sont pas classiques parce qu'ils sont vieux, mais parce qu'ils sont énergiques, frais, et dispos.* Energy, freshness, intelligent and masterly disposition:—these are characteristics of Victor Hugo when his alchemy is complete, in certain figures, like Marius and Cosette, in certain scenes, like that in the opening of *Les Travailleurs de la Mer,* where Déruchette writes the name of *Gilliatt* in the snow, on Christmas morning; but always there is a certain note of strangeness discernible there, as well.

The essential elements, then, of the romantic spirit are curiosity and the love of beauty; and it is only as an illustration of these qualities, that it seeks the Middle Age, because, in the overcharged atmosphere of the Middle Age, there are unworked sources of romantic effect, of a strange beauty, to be won, by strong imagination, out of things unlikely or remote.

Few, probably, now read Madame de Staël's[2] *De L'Allemagne,* though it has its interest, the interest which never quite fades out of work really touched with the enthusiasm of the spiritual adventurer, the pioneer in culture. It was published in 1810, to introduce to French readers a new school of writers—the romantic school, from beyond the Rhine; and it was followed, twenty-three years later, by Heine's *Romantische Schule,* as at once a supplement and a correction. Both these books, then, connect romanticism with Germany, with the names especially of Goethe and Tieck; and, to many English readers, the idea of romanticism is still inseparably connected with Germany —that Germany which, in its quaint old towns, under the spire of Strasburg or the towers of Heidelberg, was always listening in rapt inaction to the melodious, fascinating voices of the Middle Age, and which, now that it has got Strasburg back

[1] See Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables.*

[2] 1766-1817.

again, has, I suppose, almost ceased to exist. But neither Germany, with its Goethe and Tieck, nor England, with its Byron and Scott, is nearly so representative of the romantic temper as France, with Mürger,[1] and Gautier, and Victor Hugo. It is in French literature that its most characteristic expression is to be found; and that, as most closely derivative, historically, from such peculiar conditions, as ever reinforce it to the utmost.

For, although temperament has much to do with the generation of the romantic spirit, and although this spirit, with its curiosity, its thirst for a curious beauty, may be always traceable in excellent art (traceable even in Sophocles) yet still, in a limited sense, it may be said to be a product of special epochs. Outbreaks of this spirit, that is, come naturally with particular periods—times, when, in men's approaches towards art and poetry, curiosity may be noticed to take the lead, when men come to art and poetry, with a deep thirst for intellectual excitement, after a long *ennui,* or in reaction against the strain of outward, practical things: in the later Middle Age, for instance; so that medieval poetry, centering in Dante, is often opposed to Greek and Roman poetry, as romantic poetry to the classical. What the romanticism of Dante is, may be estimated, if we compare the lines in which Virgil describes the hazel-wood, from whose broken twigs flows the blood of Polydorus, not without the expression of a real shudder at the ghastly incident, with the whole canto of the *Inferno,* into which Dante has expanded them, beautifying and softening it, meanwhile, by a sentiment of profound pity. And it is especially in that period of intellectual disturbance, immediately preceding Dante, amid which the romance languages define themselves at last, that this temper is manifested. Here, in the literature of Provence, the very name of *romanticism* is stamped with its true signification: here we have indeed a romantic world, grotesque even, in the strength of its passions, almost insane in its curious expression of them, drawing all things into its sphere, making the birds, nay! lifeless things, its voices and messengers, yet so penetrated with the desire for beauty and sweetness, that it begets a wholly new species of poetry, in which the *Renaissance* may be said to begin. The last century was preëminently a classical age, an age in which, for art and literature, the element of a comely order was in the ascendant; which, passing away, left a hard battle to be fought between the classical and the romantic schools. Yet, it is in the heart of this century, of Goldsmith and Stothard,[2] of Watteau [3] and the *Siècle de Louis XIV.*— in one of its central, if not most characteristic figures, in Rousseau—that the modern or French romanticism really originates. But, what in the eighteenth century is but an exceptional phenomenon, breaking through its fair reserve and discretion only at rare intervals, is the habitual guise of the nineteenth, breaking through it perpetually, with a feverishness, an incomprehensible straining and excitement, which all experience to some degree, but yearning also, in the genuine children of the romantic school, to be *énergique, frais, et dispos*—for those qualities of energy, freshness, comely order; and often, in Mürger, in Gautier, in Victor Hugo, for instance, with singular felicity attaining them.

It is in the terrible tragedy of Rousseau, in fact, that French romanticism, with much else, begins: reading his *Confessions* we seem actually to assist at the birth of this new, strong spirit in the French mind. The wildness which has

[1] Henri Mürger (1822-1861), French writer.

[2] Thomas Stothard (1755-1834), English painter.

[3] Jean Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), French painter.

shocked so many, and the fascination which has influenced almost every one, in the squalid, yet eloquent figure we see and hear so clearly in that book, wandering under the apple-blossoms and among the vines of Neuchâtel or Vevey, actually give it the quality of a very successful romantic invention. His strangeness or distortion, his profound subjectivity, his passionateness—the *cor laceratum*—Rousseau makes all men in love with these. *Je ne suis fait comme aucun de ceux que j'ai sus. Mais si je ne vaux pas mieux, au moins je suis autre.*—"I am not made like any one else I have ever known: yet, if I am not better, at least I am different." These words, from the first page of the *Confessions,* anticipate all the Werthers,[1] Renés,[2] Obermanns,[3] of the last hundred years. For Rousseau did but anticipate a trouble in the spirit of the whole world; and thirty years afterwards, what in him was a peculiarity, became part of the general consciousness. A storm was coming: Rousseau, with others, felt it in the air, and they helped to bring it down: they introduced a disturbing element into French literature, then so trim and formal, like our own literature of the age of Queen Anne.

In 1815 the storm had come and gone, but had left, in the spirit of "young France," the *ennui* of an immense disillusion. In the last chapter of Edgar Quinet's *Révolution Française,* a work itself full of irony, of disillusion, he distinguishes two books, Senancour's *Obermann* and Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme,* as characteristic of the first decade of the present century. In those two books we detect already the disease and the cure—in *Obermann* the irony, refined into a plaintive philosophy of "indifference"—in Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme,* the refuge from a tarnished actual present, a present of disillusion, into a world of strength and beauty in the Middle Age, as at an earlier period—in *René* and *Atala*—into a free play of them in savage life. It is to minds in this spiritual situation, weary of the present, but yearning for the spectacle of beauty and strength, that the works of French romanticism appeal. They set a positive value on the intense, the exceptional; and a certain distortion is sometimes noticeable in them, as in conceptions like Victor Hugo's *Quasimodo,* or *Gwynplaine,* something of a terrible grotesque, of the *macabre,* as the French themselves call it; though always combined with perfect literary execution, as in Gautier's *La Morte Amoureuse,* or the scene of the "maimed" burial-rites of the player, dead of the frost, in his *Capitaine Fracasse*—true "flowers of the yew." It becomes grim humor in Victor Hugo's combat of Gilliatt with the devil-fish,[4] or the incident, with all its ghastly comedy drawn out at length, of the great gun detached from its fastenings on shipboard, in *Quatre-Vingt-Treize* (perhaps the most terrible of all the accidents that can happen by sea) and in the entire episode, in that book, of the *Convention.* Not less surely does it reach a genuine pathos; for the habit of noting and distinguishing one's own most intimate passages of sentiment makes one sympathetic, begetting, as it must, the power of entering, by all sorts of finer ways, into the intimate recesses of other minds; so that pity is another quality of romanticism, both Victor Hugo and Gautier being great lovers of animals, and charming writers about them, and Mürger being unrivalled in the pathos of his *Scènes de la Vie de Jeunesse.* Penetrating so finely

[1] See Goethe's sentimental novel, *The Sorrows of Werther* (1774).

[2] See Châteaubriand's romance, *René* (1802).

[3] See Etienne Pivert de Senancour's psychological novel, *Obermann* (1804).

[4] Cf. Victor Hugo, *The Toilers of the Sea.*

into all situations which appeal to pity, above all, into the special or exceptional phases of such feeling, the romantic humor is not afraid of the quaintness or singularity of its circumstances or expression, pity, indeed, being of the essense of humor; so that Victor Hugo does but turn his romanticism into practice, in his hunger and thirst after practical *Justice!*—a justice which shall no longer wrong children, or animals, for instance, by ignoring in a stupid, mere breadth of view, minute facts about them. Yet the romanticists are antinomian, too, sometimes, because the love of energy and beauty, of distinction in passion, tended naturally to become a little *bizarre,* plunging into the Middle Age, into the secrets of old Italian story. *Are we in the Inferno?*—we are tempted to ask, wondering at something malign in so much beauty. For over all a care for the refreshment of the human spirit by fine art manifests itself, a predominant sense of literary charm, so that, in their search for the secret of exquisite expression, the romantic school went back to the forgotten world of early French poetry, and literature itself became the most delicate of the arts—like "goldsmith's work," says Sainte-Beuve, of Bertrand's *Gaspard de la Nuit* [1]—and that peculiarly French gift, the gift of exquisite speech, *argute loqui,* attained in them a perfection which it had never seen before.

Stendhal, a writer whom I have already quoted, and of whom English readers might well know much more than they do, stands between the earlier and later growths of the romantic spirit. His novels are rich in romantic quality; and his other writings—partly criticism, partly personal reminiscences—are a very curious and interesting illustration of the needs out of which romanticism arose. In his book on *Racine and Shakespeare,* Stendhal argues that all good art was romantic in its day; and this is perhaps true in Stendhal's sense. That little treatise, full of "dry light" and fertile ideas, was published in the year 1823, and its object is to defend an entire independence and liberty in the choice and treatment of subject, both in art and literature, against those who upheld the exclusive authority of precedent. In pleading the cause of romanticism, therefore, it is the novelty, both of form and of motive, in writings like the *Hernani* of Victor Hugo (which soon followed it, raising a storm of criticism) that he is chiefly concerned to justify. To be interesting and really stimulating, to keep us from yawning even, art and literature must follow the subtle movements of that nimbly-shifting *Time-Spirit,* or *Zeit-Geist,* understood by French not less than by German criticism, which is always modifying men's taste, as it modifies their manners and their pleasures. This, he contends, is what all great workmen had always understood. Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, had exercised an absolute independence in their choice of subject and treatment. To turn always with that ever-changing spirit, yet to retain the flavor of what was admirably done in past generations, in the classics, as we say—is the problem of true romanticism. "Dante," he observes, "was preëminently the romantic poet. He adored Virgil, yet he wrote the *Divine Comedy,* with the episode of Ugolino,[2] which is as unlike the Aeneid as can possibly be. And those who thus obey the fundamental principle of romanticism, one by one become classical, and are joined to that ever-increasing common league, formed by men of all countries, to approach nearer and nearer to perfection."

Romanticism, then, although it has its

[1] Louis I. N. A. Bertrand (1807-1841), French poet.

[2] Cf. *Inferno,* xxxiii.

epochs, is in its essential characteristics rather a spirit which shows itself at all times, in various degrees, in individual workmen and their work, and the amount of which criticism has to estimate in them taken one by one, than the peculiarity of a time or a school. Depending on the varying proportion of curiosity and the desire of beauty, natural tendencies of the artistic spirit at all times, it must always be partly a matter of individual temperament. The eighteenth century in England has been regarded as almost exclusively a classical period; yet William Blake,[1] a type of so much which breaks through what are conventionally thought the influences of that century, is still a noticeable phenomenon in it, and the reaction in favor of naturalism in poetry begins in that century, early. There are, thus, the born romanticists and the born classicists. There are the born classicists who start with *form,* to whose minds the comeliness of the old, immemorial, well-recognized types in art and literature, have revealed themselves impressively; who will entertain no matter which will not go easily and flexibly into them; whose work aspires only to be a variation upon, or study from, the older masters. "'Tis art's decline, my son!" they are always saying, to the progressive element in their own generation; to those who care for that which in fifty years' time every one will be caring for. On the other hand, there are the born romanticists, who start with an original, untried *matter,* still in fusion; who conceive this vividly, and hold by it as the essence of their work; who, by the very vividness and heat of their conception, purge away, sooner or later, all that is not organically appropriate to it, till the whole effect adjusts itself in clear, orderly, proportionate form; which form, after a very little time, becomes classical in its turn.

[1] 1757-1827.

The romantic or classical character of a picture, a poem, a literary work, depends, then, on the balance of certain qualities in it; and in this sense, a very real distinction may be drawn between good classical and good romantic work. But all critical terms are relative; and there is at least a valuable suggestion in that theory of Stendhal's, that all good art was romantic in its day. In the beauties of Homer and Pheidias, quiet as they now seem, there must have been, for those who confronted them for the first time, excitement and surprise, the sudden, unforeseen satisfaction of the desire of beauty. Yet the *Odyssey,* with its marvelous adventure, is more romantic than the *Iliad,*—which nevertheless contains among many other romantic episodes, that of the immortal horses of Achilles, who weep at the death of Patroclus. Æschylus is more romantic than Sophocles, whose *Philoctetes,* were it written now, might figure, for the strangeness of its motive and the perfectness of its execution, as typically romantic; while, of Euripides, it may be said, that his method in writing his plays is to sacrifice readily almost everything else, so that he may attain the fullness of a single romantic effect. These two tendencies, indeed, might be applied as a measure or standard, all through Greek and Roman art and poetry, with very illuminating results; and for an analyst of the romantic principle in art, no exercise would be more profitable, than to walk through the collection of classical antiquities at the Louvre, or the British Museum, or to examine some representative collection of Greek coins, and note how the element of curiosity, of the love of strangeness, insinuates itself into classical design, and record the effects of the romantic spirit there, the traces of struggle, of the grotesque even, though overbalanced here by sweetness; as in the sculpture of

Chartres and Rheims, the real sweetness of mind in the sculptor is often overbalanced by the grotesque, by the rudeness of his strength.

Classicism, then, means for Stendhal, for that younger enthusiastic band of French writers whose unconscious method he formulated into principles, the reign of what is pedantic, conventional, and narrowly academical in art; for him, all good art is romantic. To Sainte-Beuve, who understands the term in a more liberal sense, it is the characteristic of certain epochs, of certain spirits in every epoch, not given to the exercise of original imagination, but rather to the working out of refinements of manner on some authorized matter; and who bring to their perfection, in this way, the elements of sanity, of order and beauty in manner. In general criticism, again, it means the spirit of Greece and Rome, of some phases in literature and art that may seem of equal authority with Greece and Rome, the age of Louis the Fourteenth, the age of Johnson; though this is at best an uncritical use of the term, because in Greek and Roman work there are typical examples of the romantic spirit. But explain the terms as we may, in application to particular epochs, there are these two elements always recognizable; united in perfect art—in Sophocles, in Dante, in the highest work of Goethe, though not always absolutely balanced there; and these two elements may be not inappropriately termed the classical and romantic tendencies.

Material for the artist, motives of inspiration, are not yet exhausted: our curious, complex, aspiring age still abounds in subjects for æsthetic manipulation by the literary as well as by other forms of art. For the literary art, at all events, the problem just now is, to induce order upon the contorted, proportionless accumulation of our knowledge and experience, our science and history, our hopes and disillusion, and, in effecting this, to do consciously what has been done hitherto for the most part too unconsciously, to write our English language as the Latins wrote theirs, as the French write, as scholars should write. Appealing, as he may, to precedent in this matter, the scholar will still remember that if "the style is the man" it is also the age: that nineteenth century too will be found to have had its style, justified by necessity—a style very different, alike from the baldness of an impossible "Queen Anne" revival, and an incorrect, incondite exuberance, after the mode of Elizabeth: that we can only return to either at the price of an impoverishment of form or matter, or both, although, an intellectually rich age such as ours being necessarily an eclectic one, we may well cultivate some of the excellences of literary types so different as those: that in literature as in other matters it is well to unite as many diverse elements as may be: that the individual writer or artist, certainly, is to be estimated by the number of graces he combines, and his power of interpenetrating them in a given work. To discriminate schools, of art, of literature, is, of course, part of the obvious business of literary criticism: but, in the work of literary production, it is easy to be overmuch occupied concerning them. For, in truth, the legitimate contention is, not of one age or school of literary art against another, but of all successive schools alike, against the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form.

THE PROBLEM PLAY: LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

Comedy, much more than tragedy, is likely to reflect the spirit of its age. It is intimate and familiar, and draws its material from the everyday life of the time. Consequently while its primary purpose is to entertain and amuse, it may at times do more. It may often reveal popular interests and sentiment and not infrequently it may touch on problems that the age is trying to solve.

The nineteenth century was in many ways an age of readjustment—economic, social, scientific, religious. The industrial revolution had been succeeded by economic changes and social reforms. The growing intellectual and economic independence of women, together with their more active participation in the life of the world, raised a number of questions that had not been prominent before. And the conflict between religion and science paved the way for a more questioning attitude towards matters of conventional morality. Consciousness of all these changes is reflected in the literature of the age—in its poetry, in the essay, and in the novel and the drama. One result in drama is the problem play.

Of the many social problems which were treated on the stage those involving marriage and the relations between men and women were most prominent. One of these problems, several times treated, is that of the woman who is trying to live down, or at least recover from, an indiscretion or a breach of morality in her past life. What are her chances of success? To what extent does she deserve to succeed? Should she, because of one misstep, forever forfeit her right to happiness, her right to associate with people who have not sinned or have not been found out? These are interesting questions for any play to raise. When the woman has beauty, brilliancy, daring, when she is in constant danger of being betrayed, and when she stakes all chance of regaining her position on the fortune of one bold attempt, the tension becomes very great. And when to all these things are added paradox, sparkling repartee, and flashes of abundant wit, we have—*Lady Windermere's Fan.*

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900), besides writing plays, was an essayist, novelist, and poet. The *Ballad of Reading Gaol,* which sprang from his life in prison, is included in the section of Contemporary Narrative Poetry. His plays, of which *The Importance of Being Ernest* and *A Woman of No Importance* may also be mentioned, are all highly artificial in their wit and cleverness, but, perhaps for this very reason, most readable. *Lady Windermere's Fan* was first performed in 1892.

OSCAR WILDE (1856–1900)

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN

A Play about a Good Woman

CHARACTERS

LORD WINDERMERE
LORD DARLINGTON
LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON
MR. CECIL GRAHAM
MR. DUMBY
MR. HOPPER
PARKER, *Butler*
LADY WINDERMERE
THE DUCHESS OF BERWICK
LADY AGATHA CARLISLE
LADY PLYMDALE
LADY JEDBURGH
LADY STUTFIELD
MRS. COWPER-COWPER
MRS. ERLYNNE
ROSALIE, *Maid*

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I. *Morning-room in Lord Windermere's House.*

ACT II. *Drawing-room in Lord Windermere's House.*

ACT III. *Lord Darlington's rooms.*

ACT IV. *Same as Act I.*

TIME.—*The Present.* PLACE.—*London.*

The action of the play takes place within twenty-four hours, beginning on a Tuesday afternoon at five o'clock and ending the next day at 1:30 P. M.

ACT I

SCENE.—*Morning-room of* LORD WINDERMERE'S *house in Carlton House Terrace. Doors* C. *and* R. *Bureau with books and papers* R. *Sofa with small tea-table* L. *Window opening on to terrace* L. *Table* R.

LADY WINDERMERE *is at table* R. *arranging roses in a blue bowl.*

(*Enter* PARKER)

Parker. Is your ladyship at home this afternoon?

Lady Windermere. Yes—who has called?

Parker. Lord Darlington, my lady.

Lady Windermere. (*Hesitates for a moment*) Show him up—and I'm at home to anyone who calls.

Parker. Yes, my lady. (*Exits* C.)

Lady Windermere. It's best for me to see him before to-night. I'm glad he's come.

(*Enter* PARKER C.)

Parker. Lord Darlington.

(*Enter* LORD DARLINGTON. *Exit* PARKER)

Lord Darlington. How do you do, Lady Windermere?

Lady Windermere. How do you do, Lord Darlington? No, I can't shake hands with you. My hands are all wet with these roses. Aren't they lovely? They came up from Selby this morning.

Lord Darlington. They are quite perfect. (*Sees a fan lying on the table*) And what a wonderful fan! May I look at it?

Lady Windermere. Do. Pretty, isn't it? It's got my name on it, and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It's my husband's birthday present to me. You know to-day is my birthday.

Lord Darlington. No. Is it really?

Lady Windermere. Yes; I'm of age to-day. Quite an important day in my life, isn't it? That is why I am giving this party to-night. Do sit down. (*Still arranging flowers*)

Lord Darlington. (*Sitting down*) I wish I had known it was your birthday, Lady Windermere. I would have covered the whole street in front your house with

flowers for you to walk on. They are made for you. (*A short pause*)

Lady Windermere. Lord Darlington, you annoyed me last night at the Foreign Office. I am afraid you are going to annoy me again.

Lord Darlington. I, Lady Windermere?

(*Enter* PARKER *and* FOOTMAN C. *with tray and tea-things*)

Lady Windermere. Put it there, Parker. That will do. (*Wipes her hands with her pocket-handkerchief, goes to tea-table* L. *and sits down*) Won't you come over, Lord Darlington?

(*Exit* PARKER C.)

Lord Darlington. (*Takes chair and goes across* L. C.) I am quite miserable, Lady Windermere. You must tell me what I did. (*Sits down at table* L.)

Lady Windermere. Well, you kept paying me elaborate compliments the whole evening.

Lord Darlington. (*Smiling*) Ah, now-a-days we are all of us so hard up, that the only pleasant things to pay *are* compliments. They're the only things we *can* pay.

Lady Windermere. (*Shaking her head*) No, I am talking very seriously. You mustn't laugh, I am quite serious. I don't like compliments, and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he doesn't mean.

Lord Darlington. Ah, but I did mean them. (*Takes tea which she offers him*)

Lady Windermere. (*Gravely*) I hope not. I should be sorry to have to quarrel with you, Lord Darlington. I like you very much, you know that. But I shouldn't like you at all if I thought you were what most other men are. Believe me, you are better than most other men, and I sometimes think you pretend to be worse.

Lord Darlington. We all have our little vanities, Lady Windermere.

Lady Windermere. Why do you make that your special one? (*Still seated at table* L.)

Lord Darlington. (*Still seated L.* C.) Oh, now-a-days so many conceited people go about society pretending to be good, that I think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition to pretend to be bad. Besides, there is this to be said. If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism.

Lady Windermere. Don't you *want* the world to take you seriously then, Lord Darlington?

Lord Darlington. No, not the world. Who are the people the world takes seriously? All the dull people one can think of, from the Bishops down to the bores. I should like *you* to take me very seriously, Lady Windermere, *you* more than any one else in life.

Lady Windermere. Why—why me?

Lord Darlington. (*After a slight hesitation*) Because I think we might be great friends. Let us be great friends. You may want a friend some day.

Lady Windermere. Why do you say that?

Lord Darlington. Oh, we all want friends at times.

Lady Windermere. I think we're very good friends already, Lord Darlington. We can always remain so as long as you don't——

Lord Darlington. Don't what?

Lady Windermere. Don't spoil it by saying extravagant, silly things to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am glad of it. My mother died when I was

a mere child. I lived always with Lady Julia, my father's eldest sister, you know. She was stern to me, but she taught me, what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong. *She* allowed of no compromise. *I* allow of none.

Lord Darlington. My dear Lady Windermere!

Lady Windermere. (*Leaning back on the sofa*) You look on me as being behind the age.—Well, I am! I should be sorry to be on the same level as an age like this.

Lord Darlington. You think the age very bad?

Lady Windermere. Yes. Now-a-days people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

Lord Darlington. (*Smiling*) Oh, anything is better than being sacrificed!

Lady Windermere. (*Leaning forward*) Don't say that.

Lord Darlington. I do say it. I feel it—I know it.

(*Enter* PARKER C.)

Parker. The men want to know if they are to put the carpets on the terrace for to-night, my lady?

Lady Windermere. You don't think it will rain, Lord Darlington, do you?

Lord Darlington. I won't hear of its raining on your birthday!

Lady Windermere. Tell them to do it at once, Parker. (*Exit* PARKER C.)

Lord Darlington. (*Still seated*) Do you think, then—of course I am only putting an imaginary instance—do you think that, in the case of a young married couple, say about two years married, if the husband suddenly becomes the intimate friend of a woman of—well, more than doubtful character, is always calling upon her, lunching with her, and probably paying her bills—do you think that the wife should not console herself?

Lady Windermere. (*Frowning*) Console herself?

Lord Darlington. Yes, I think she should—I think she has the right.

Lady Windermere. Because the husband is vile—should the wife be vile also?

Lord Darlington. Vileness is a terrible word, Lady Windermere.

Lady Windermere. It is a terrible thing, Lord Darlington.

Lord Darlington. Do you know I am afraid that good people do a great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming, and you, Lady Windermere, can't help belonging to them.

Lady Windermere. Now, Lord Darlington. (*Rising and crossing* R., *front of him*) Don't stir, I am merely going to finish my flowers. (*Goes to table* R. C.)

Lord Darlington. (*Rising and moving chair*) And I must say I think you are very hard on modern life, Lady Windermere. Of course there is much against it, I admit. Most women, for instance, now-a-days, are rather mercenary.

Lady Windermere. Don't talk about such people.

Lord Darlington. Well, then, setting mercenary people aside, who, of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have committed what the world calls a fault should never be forgiven?

Lady Windermere (*Standing at table*) I think they should never be forgiven.

Lord Darlington. And men? Do you think that there should be the same laws for men as there are for women?

Lady Windermere. Certainly!

Lord Darlington. I think life too com-

plex a thing to be settled by these hard and fast rules.

Lady Windermere. If we had "these hard and fast rules," we should find life much more simple.

Lord Darlington. You allow of no exceptions?

Lady Windermere. None!

Lord Darlington. Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are Lady Windermere!

Lady Windermere. The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

Lord Darlington. I couldn't help it. I can resist everything except temptation.

Lady Windermere. You have the modern affectation of weakness.

Lord Darlington. (*Looking at her*) It's only an affectation, Lady Windermere.

(*Enter* PARKER C.)

Parker. The Duchess of Berwick and Lady Agatha Carlisle.

(*Enter the* DUCHESS OF BERWICK *and* LADY AGATHA CARLISLE C. *Exit* PARKER C.)

Duchess of Berwick. (*Coming down* C. *and shaking hands*) Dear Margaret, I am so pleased to see you. You remember Agatha, don't you? (*Crossing* L. C.) How do you do, Lord Darlington? I won't let you know my daughter, you are far too wicked.

Lord Darlington. Don't say that, Duchess. As a wicked man I am a complete failure. Why, there are lots of people who say I have never really done anything wrong in the whole course of my life. Of course they only say it behind my back.

Duchess of Berwick. Isn't he dreadful? Agatha, this is Lord Darlington. Mind you, don't believe a word he says. (LORD DARLINGTON *crosses* R. C.) No, no tea, thank you, dear. (*Crosses and sits on sofa*) We have just had tea at Lady Markby's. Such bad tea, too. It was quite undrinkable. I wasn't at all surprised. Her own son-in-law supplies it. Agatha is looking forward so much to your ball to-night, dear Margaret.

Lady Windermere. (*Seated* L. C.) Oh, you mustn't think it is going to be a ball, Duchess. It is only a dance in honor of my birthday. A small and early.

Lord Darlington. (*Standing* L. C.) Very small, very early, and very select. Duchess.

Duchess of Berwick. (*On sofa* L.) Of course it's going to be select. But we know *that*, dear Margaret, about *your* house. It is really one of the few houses in London where I can take Agatha, and where I feel perfectly secure about poor Berwick. I don't know what society is coming to. The most dreadful people seem to go everywhere. They certainly come to my parties—the men get quite furious if one doesn't ask them. Really, some one should make a stand against it.

Lady Windermere. I will, Duchess. I will have no one in my house about whom there is any scandal.

Lord Darlington. (R. C.) Oh, don't say that, Lady Windermere. I should never be admitted! (*Sitting*)

Duchess of Berwick. Oh, men don't matter. With women it is different. We're good. Some of us are, at least. But we are positively getting elbowed into the corner. Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do so.

Lord Darlington. It's a curious thing, Duchess, about the game of marriage—a game, by the way, that is going out of fashion—the wives hold all the honors and invariably lose the odd trick.

Duchess of Berwick. The odd trick? Is that the husband, Lord Darlington?

Lord Darlington. It would be rather a good name for the modern husband.

Duchess of Berwick. Dear Lord Darlington, how thoroughly depraved you are!

Lady Windermere. Lord Darlington is trivial.

Lord Darlington. Ah, don't say that, Lady Windermere.

Lady Windermere. Why do you *talk* so trivially about life, then?

Lord Darlington. Because I think that life is far too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it. (*Moves up* C.)

Duchess of Berwick. What does he mean? Do, as a concession to my poor wits, Lord Darlington, just explain to me what you really mean?

Lord Darlington. (*Coming down back of table*) I think I had better not, Duchess. Now-a-days to be intelligible is to be found out. Good-by! (*Shakes hands with* DUCHESS) And now (*goes up stage*), Lady Windermere, good-by. I may come to-night, mayn't I? Do let me come.

Lady Windermere. (*Standing up stage with* LORD DARLINGTON) Yes, certainly. But you are not to say foolish, insincere things to people.

Lord Darlington. (*Smiling*) Ah! you are beginning to reform me. It is a dangerous thing to reform any one, Lady Windermere. (*Bows, and exit* C.)

Duchess of Berwick. (*Who has risen, goes* C.) What a charming, wicked creature! I like him so much. I'm quite delighted he's gone! How sweet you're looking! Where *do* you get your gowns? And now I must tell you how sorry I am for you, dear Margaret. (*Crosses to sofa and sits with* LADY WINDERMERE) Agatha, darling!

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma. (*Rises*)

Duchess of Berwick. Will you go and look over the photograph album that I see there?

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma. (*Goes to table* L.)

Duchess of Berwick. Dear girl! She is so fond of photographs of Switzerland. Such a pure taste, I think. But I really am so sorry for you, Margaret.

Lady Windermere. (*Smiling*) Why, Duchess?

Duchess of Berwick. Oh, on account of that horrid woman. She dresses so well, too, which makes it much worse, sets such a dreadful example. Augustus—you know my disreputable brother—such a trial to us all—well, Augustus is completely infatuated about her. It is quite scandalous, for she is absolutely inadmissible into society. Many a woman has a past, but I am told that she has at least a dozen, and that they all fit.

Lady Windermere. Whom are you talking about, Duchess?

Duchess of Berwick. About Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady Windermere. Mrs. Erlynne? I never heard of her, Duchess. And what *has* she to do with me?

Duckess of Berwick. My poor child! Agatha, darling!

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. Will you go out on the terrace and look at the sunset?

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

(*Exit through window* L.)

Duchess of Berwick. Sweet girl! So devoted to sunsets! Shows such refinement of feeling, does it not? After all, there is nothing like nature, is there?

Lady Windermere. But what is it, Duchess? Why do you talk to me about this person?

Duchess of Berwick. Don't you really know? I assure you we're all so distressed about it. Only last night at dear Lady Fansen's every one was saying how extraordinary it was that, of all men in London, Windermere should behave in such a way.

Lady Windermere. My husband—what has *he* got to do with any woman of that kind?

Duchess of Berwick. Ah, what indeed, dear? That is the point. He goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and while he is there she is not at home to any one. Not that many ladies call on her, dear, but she has a great many disreputable men friends—my own brother in particular, as I told you—and that is what makes it so dreadful about Windermere. We looked upon *him* as being such a model husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about it. My dear nieces—you know the Saville girls, don't you?—such nice domestic creatures—plain, dreadfully plain, but so good—well, they're always at the window doing fancy work, and making ugly things for the poor, which I think so useful of them in these dreadful socialistic days, and this terrible woman has taken a house in Curzon Street, right opposite them—such a respectable street, too. I don't know what we're coming to! And they tell me that Windermere goes there four and five times a week—they *see* him. They can't help it—and although they never talk scandal, they—well, of course— they remark on it to every one. And the worst of it all is, that I have been told that this woman has got a great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that she came to London six months ago without anything at all to speak of, and now she has this charming house in Mayfair, drives her pony in the Park every afternoon, and all—well, all—since she has known poor dear Windermere.

Lady Windermere. Oh, I can't believe it!

Duchess of Berwick. But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk to you, and advise you to take Windermere away at once to Homburg or to Aix, where he'll have something to amuse him, and where you can watch him all day long. I assure you, my dear, that on several occasions after I was first married I had to pretend to be very ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters, merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any large sums of money to anybody. He is far too high-principled for that.

Lady Windermere. (*Interrupting*) Duchess, Duchess, it's impossible! (*Rising and crossing stage* C.) We are only married two years. Our child is but six months old. (*Sits in chair* R. *of* L. *table*)

Duchess of Berwick. Ah, the dear pretty baby! How is the little darling? Is it a boy or a girl? I hope a girl—ah, no, I remember it's a boy! I'm so sorry. Boys are so wicked. My boy is excessively immoral. You wouldn't believe at what hours he comes home. And he's only left Oxford a few months—I really don't know what they teach them there.

Lady Windermere. Are *all* men bad?

Duchess of Berwick. Oh, all of them, my dear, all of them, without any exception. And they never grow any better. Men become old, but they never become good.

Lady Windermere. Windermere and I married for love.

Duchess of Berwick. Yes, we begin like that. It was only Berwick's brutal and incessant threats of suicide that made me accept him at all, and before the year was out he was running after all kinds of petticoats, every color, every shape, every material. In fact, before the honeymoon was over, I caught him winking at my maid, a most pretty, respectable girl. I dismissed her at once without a character. —No, I remember I passed her on to my sister; poor dear Sir George is so short-sighted, I thought it wouldn't matter.

But it did, though it was most unfortunate. (*Rises*) And now, my dear child, I must go, as we are dining out. And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he'll come back to you all right.

Lady Windermere. Come back to me? (C.)

Duchess of Berwick. (L. C.) Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husbands away from us, but they always come back, slightly damaged, of course. And don't make scenes, men hate them!

Lady Windermere. It is very kind of you, Duchess, to come and tell me all his. But I can't believe that my husband is untrue to me.

Duchess of Berwick. Pretty child! I was like that once. Now I know that all men are monsters. (*Lady Windermere rings bell*) The only thing to do is to feed the wretches well. A good cook does wonders, and that I know you have. My dear Margaret, you are not going to cry?

Lady Windermere. You needn't be afraid, Duchess, I never cry.

Duchess of Berwick. That's quite right, dear. Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones. Agatha, darling!

Lady Agatha. (*Entering* L.) Yes, Mamma. (*Stands back of table* L. C.)

Duchess of Berwick. Come and bid good-by to Lady Windermere, and thank her for your charming visit. (*Coming down again*) And by the way, I must thank you for sending a card to Mr. Hopper—he's that rich young Australian people are taking such notice of just at present. His father made a great fortune by selling some kind of food in circular tins—most palatable, I believe—I fancy it is the thing the servants always refuse to eat. But the son is quite interesting. I think he's attracted by dear Agatha's clever talk. Of course, we should be very sorry to lose her, but I think that a mother who doesn't part with a daughter every season has no real affection. We're coming to-night, dear. (PARKER *opens* C. *doors*) And remember my advice, take the poor fellow out of town at once, it is the only thing to do. Good-by, once more; come, Agatha.

(*Exeunt* DUCHESS *and* LADY AGATHA C.)

Lady Windermere. How horrible! I understand now what Lord Darlington meant by the imaginary instance of the couple not two years married. Oh, it can't be true—she spoke of enormous sums of money paid to this woman. I know where Arthur keeps his bank book—in one of the drawers of that desk. I might find out by that. I *will* find out. (*Opens drawer*) No, it is some hideous mistake. (*Rises and goes* C.) Some silly scandal! He loves *me!* He loves *me!* But why should I not look? I am his wife, I have a right to look! (*Returns to bureau, takes out book and examines it, page by page, smiles and gives a sigh of relief*) I knew it, there is not a word of truth in this stupid story. (*Puts book back in drawer. As she does so, starts and takes out another book*) A second book—private—locked! (*Tries to open it, but fails. Sees paper knife on bureau, and with it cuts cover from book. Begins to start at the first page*) Mrs. Erlynne—£600—Mrs. Erlynne—£700—Mrs. Erlynne—£400. Oh! it is true! it is true! How horrible! (*Throws book on floor*)

(*Enter* LORD WINDERMERE C.)

Lord Windermere. Well, dear, has the fan been sent home yet? (*Going* R. C. *sees book*) Margaret, you have cut open my bank book. You have no right to do such a thing!

Lady Windermere. You think it wrong that you are found out, don't you?

Lord Windermere. I think it wrong that a wife should spy on her husband.

Lady Windermere. I did not spy on you. I never knew of this woman's existence till half an hour ago. Some one who pitied me was kind enough to tell me what every one in London knows already —your daily visits to Curzon Street, your mad infatuation, the monstrous sums of money you squander on this infamous woman! (*Crossing* L.)

Lord Windermere. Margaret, don't talk like that of Mrs. Erlynne, you don't know how unjust it is!

Lady Windermere. (*Turning to him*) You are very jealous of Mrs. Erlynne's honor. I wish you had been as jealous of mine.

Lord Windermere. Your honor is untouched, Margaret. You don't think for a moment that—— (*Puts book back into desk*)

Lady Windermere. I think that you spend your money strangely. That is all. Oh, don't imagine I mind about the money. As far as I am concerned, you may squander everything we have. But what I *do* mind is that you who have loved me, you who have taught me to love you, should pass from the love that is given to the love that is bought. Oh, it's horrible! (*Sits on sofa*) And it is I who feel degraded. *You* don't feel anything. I feel stained, utterly stained. You can't realize how hideous the last six months seem to me now—every kiss you have given me is tainted in my memory.

Lord Windermere. (*Crossing to her*) Don't say that, Margaret. I never loved any one in the whole world but you.

Lady Windermere. (*Rises*) Who is this woman, then? Why do you take a house for her?

Lord Windermere. I did not take a house for her.

Lady Windermere. You gave her the money to do it, which is the same thing.

Lord Windermere. Margaret, as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne——

Lady Windermere. Is there a Mr. Erlynne—or is he a myth?

Lord Windermere. Her husband died many years ago. She is alone in the world.

Lady Windermere. No relations? (*A pause*)

Lord Windermere. None.

Lady Windermere. Rather curious, isn't it? (L.)

Lord Windermere. (L. C.) Margaret, I was saying to you—and I beg you to listen to me—that as far as I have known Mrs. Erlynne, she has conducted herself well. If years ago——

Lady Windermere. Oh! (*Crossing* R. C.) I don't want details about her life.

Lord Windermere. I am not going to give you any details about her life. I tell you simply this—Mrs. Erlynne was once honored, loved, respected. She was well born, she had a position—she lost everything—threw it away, if you like. That makes it all the more bitter. Misfortunes one can endure—they come from outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—ah! there is the sting of life. It was twenty years ago, too. She was little more than a girl then. She had been a wife for even less time than you have.

Lady Windermere. I am not interested in her—and—you should not mention this woman and me in the same breath. It is an error of taste. (*Sitting* R. *at desk*)

Lord Windermere. Margaret, you could save this woman. She wants to get back into society, and she wants you to help her. (*Crossing to her*)

Lady Windermere. Me!

Lord Windermere. Yes, you.

Lady Windermere. How impertinent of her! (*A pause*)

Lord Windermere. Margaret, I came to ask you a great favor, and I still ask it

of you, though you have discovered what I had intended you should never have known, that I have given Mrs. Erlynne a large sum of money. I want you to send her an invitation for our party to-night. (*Standing* L. *of her*)

Lady Windermere. You are mad. (*Rises*)

Lord Windermere. I entreat you. People may chatter about her, do chatter about her, of course, but they don't know anything definite against her. She has been to several houses—not to houses where you would go, I admit, but still to houses where women who are in what is called Society now-a-days do go. That does not content her. She wants you to receive her once.

Lady Windermere. As a triumph for her, I suppose?

Lord Windermere. No; but because she knows that you are a good woman—and that if she comes here once she will have a chance of a happier, a surer life than she has had. She will make no further effort to know you. Won't you help a woman who is trying to get back?

Lady Windermere. No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

Lord Windermere. I beg of you.

Lady Windermere. (*Crossing to door* R.) I am going to dress for dinner, and don't mention the subject again this evening. Arthur (*going to him* C.), you fancy because I have no father or mother that I am alone in the world and that you can treat me as you choose. You are wrong, I have friends, many friends.

Lord Windermere. (L. C.) Margaret, you are talking foolishly, recklessly. I won't argue with you, but I insist upon your asking Mrs. Erlynne to-night.

Lady Windermere. (R. C.) I shall do nothing of the kind. (*Crossing* L. C.)

Lord Windermere. You refuse? (C.)

Lady Windermere. Absolutely!

Lord Windermere. Ah, Margaret, do this for my sake; it is her last chance.

Lady Windermere. What has that to do with me?

Lord Windermere. How hard good women are!

Lady Windermere. How weak bad men are!

Lord Windermere. Margaret, none of us men may be good enough for the women we marry—that is quite true—but you don't imagine I would ever—oh, the suggestion is monstrous!

Lady Windermere. Why should *you* be different from other men? I am told that there is hardly a husband in London who does not waste his life over *some* shameful passion.

Lord Windermere. I am not one of them.

Lady Windermere. I am not sure of that!

Lord Windermere. You are sure in your heart. But don't make chasm after chasm between us. God knows the last few minutes have thrust us wide enough apart. Sit down and write the card.

Lady Windermere. Nothing in the whole world would induce me.

Lord Windermere. (*Crossing to the bureau*) Then I will. (*Rings electric bell, sits and writes card*)

Lady Windermere. You are going to invite this woman? (*Crossing to him*)

Lord Windermere. Yes. (*Pause*)

(*Enter* PARKER)

Lord Windermere. Parker?

Parker. Yes, my lord. (*Comes down* L. C.)

Lord Windermere. Have this note sent to Mrs. Erlynne at No. 84A Curzon Street. (*Crossing to* L. C. *and giving note to* PARKER) There is no answer.

(*Exit* PARKER C.)

Lady Windermere. Arthur, if that woman comes here, I shall insult her.

Lord Windermere. Margaret, don't say that.

Lady Windermere. I mean it.

Lord Windermere. Child, if you did such a thing, there's not a woman in London who wouldn't pity you.

Lady Windermere. There is not a *good* woman in London who would not applaud me. We have been too lax. We must make an example. I propose to begin to-night. (*Picking up fan*) Yes, you gave me this fan to-day; it was your birthday present. If that woman crosses my threshold, I shall strike her across the face with it.

Lord Windermere. Margaret, you couldn't do such a thing.

Lady Windermere. You don't know me! (*Moves* R.)

(*Enter* PARKER)

Lady Windermere. Parker!

Parker. Yes, my lady.

Lady Windermere. I shall dine in my own room. I don't want dinner, in fact. See that everything is ready by half-past ten. And, Parker, be sure you pronounce the names of the guests very distinctly to-night. Sometimes you speak so fast that I miss them. I am particularly anxious to hear the names quite clearly, so as to make no mistake. You understand, Parker?

Parker. Yes, my lady.

Lady Windermere. That will do!

(*Exit* PARKER C.)

(*Speaking to* LORD WINDERMERE) Arthur, if that woman comes here—I warn you——

Lord Windermere. Margaret, you'll ruin us!

Lady Windermere. Us! From this moment my life is separate from yours. But if you wish to avoid a public scandal, write at once to this woman, and tell her that I forbid her to come here!

Lord Windermere. I will not—I cannot—she must come!

Lady Windermere. Then I shall do exactly as I have said. (*Goes* R.) You leave me no choice. (*Exit* R.)

Lord Windermere. (*Calling after her*) Margaret! Margaret! (*A pause*) My God! What shall I do! I dare not tell her who this woman really is. The shame would kill her. (*Sinks down into a chair and buries his face in his hands*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Drawing-room in* LORD WINDERMERE'S *house. Door* R. U. *opens into ballroom, where band is playing. Door* L. *through which guests are entering. Door* L. U. *opens on an illuminated terrace. Palms, flowers and brilliant lights. Room crowded with guests.* LADY WINDERMERE *is receiving them.*

Duchess of Berwick. (*Up* C.) So strange Lord Windermere isn't here. Mr. Hopper is very late, too. You have kept those five dances for him, Agatha! (*Comes down*)

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mama.

Duchess of Berwick. (*Sitting on sofa*) Just let me see your card. I'm so glad Lady Windermere has revived cards.—They're a mother's only safeguard. You dear simple little thing! (*Scratches out two names*) No nice girl should ever waltz with such particularly younger sons! It looks so fast! The last two dances you must pass on the terrace with Mr. Hopper.

(*Enter* MR. DUMBY *and* LADY PLYMDALE *from the ballroom*)

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mama.

Duchess of Berwick. (*Fanning herself*) The air is so pleasant here.

Parker. Mrs. Cowper-Cowper. Lady Stutfield. Sir James Royston. Mr. Guy Berkeley. (*These people enter as announced*)

Dumby. Good-evening, Lady Stutfield. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season.

Lady Stutfield. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It's been a delightful season, hasn't it?

Dumby. Quite delightful! Good-evening, Duchess. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

Duchess of Berwick. I suppose so, Mr. Dumby. It has been a very dull season, hasn't it?

Dumby. Dreadfully dull! Dreadfully dull!

Mrs. Cowper-Cowper. Good-evening, Mr. Dumby. I suppose this will be the last ball of the season?

Dumby. Oh, I think not. There'll probably be two more. (*Wanders back to* Lady Plymdale).

Parker. Mr. Rufford. Lady Jedburgh and Miss Graham. Mr. Hopper. (*These people enter as announced*)

Hopper. How do you do, Lady Windermere? How do you do, Duchess? (*Bows to* Lady Agatha)

Duchess of Berwick. Dear Mr. Hopper, how nice of you to come so early. We all know how you are run after in London.

Hopper. Capital place! London, They are not nearly so exclusive in London as they are in Sydney.

Duchess of Berwick. Ah! we know your value, Mr. Hopper. We wish there were more like you. It would make life so much easier. Do you know, Mr. Hopper, dear Agatha and I are so much interested in Australia. It must be so pretty with all the dear little kangaroos flying about. Agatha has found it on the map. What a curious shape it is! Just like a large packing-case. However, it is a very young country, isn't it?

Hopper. Wasn't it made at the same time as the others, Duchess?

Duchess of Berwick. How clever you are, Mr. Hopper. You have a cleverness quite of your own. Now I mustn't keep you.

Hopper. But I should like to dance with Lady Agatha, Duchess.

Duchess of Berwick. Well, I *hope* she has a dance left. Have you got a dance left, Agatha?

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. The next one?

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Hopper. May I have the pleasure? (Lady Agatha *bows*)

Duchess of Berwick. Mind you take great care of my little chatterbox, Mr. Hopper. (Lady Agatha *and* Mr. Hopper *pass into ballroom*)

(*Enter* Lord Windermere L.)

Lord Windermere. Margaret, I want to speak to you.

Lady Windermere. In a moment. (*The music stops*)

Parker. Lord Augustus Lorton.

(*Enter* Lord Augustus Lorton)

Lord Augustus. Good-evening Lady Windermere.

Duchess of Berwick. Sir James, will you take me into the ballroom? Augustus has been dining with us to-night. I really have had quite enough of dear Augustus for the moment. (Sir James R. *gives the* Duchess *his arm and escorts her into the ballroom*)

Parker. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bowden. Lord and Lady Paisley. Lord Darlington. (*These people enter as announced*)

Lord Augustus. (*Coming up to* Lord Windermere) Want to speak to you

particularly, dear boy. I'm worn to a shadow. Know I don't look it. None of us men do look what we really are. Demmed good thing, too. What I want to know is this. Who is she? Where does she come from? Why hasn't she got any demmed relations? Demmed nuisance, relations! But they make one so demmed respectable.

Lord Windermere. You are talking of Mrs. Erlynne, I suppose. I only met her six months ago. Till then I never knew of her existence.

Lord Augustus. You have seen a good deal of her since then.

Lord Windermere. (*Coldly*) Yes, I have seen a good deal of her since then. I have just seen her.

Lord Augustus. Egad! the women are very down on her. I have been dining with Arabella this evening. By Jove! you should have heard what she said about Mrs. Erlynne. She didn't leave a rag on her. . . . (*Aside*) Berwick and I told her that didn't matter much, as the lady in question must have an extremely fine figure. You should have seen Arabella's expression! . . . But, look here, dear boy. I don't know what to do about Mrs. Erlynne. Egad! I might be married to her; she treats me with such demmed indifference. She's deuced clever, too! She explains everything. Egad! She explains you. She has got any amount of explanations for you—and all of them different.

Lord Windermere. No explanations are necessary about my friendship with Mrs. Erlynne.

Lord Augustus. Hem! Well, look here, dear old fellow. Do you think she will ever get into this demmed thing called Society? Would you introduce her to your wife? No use beating about the confounded bush. Would you do that?

Lord Windermere. Mrs. Erlynne is coming here to-night.

Lord Augustus. Your wife has sent her a card?

Lord Windermere. Mrs. Erlynne has received a card.

Lord Augustus. Then she's all right, dear boy. But why didn't you tell me that before? It would have saved me a heap of worry and demmed misunderstandings!

(LADY AGATHA *and* MR. HOPPER *cross and exit on terrace* L. U. E.)

Parker. Mr. Cecil Graham! (*Enter* MR. CECIL GRAHAM)

Cecil Graham. (*Bows to* LADY WINDERMERE, *passes over and shakes hands with* LORD WINDERMERE) Good evening, Arthur. Why don't you ask me how I am? I like people to ask me how I am. It shows a widespread interest in my health. Now to-night I am not at all well. Been dining with my people. Wonder why it is one's people are always so tedious? My father would talk morality after dinner. I told him he was old enough to know better. But my experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all. Hullo, Tuppy! Hear you're going to be married again; thought you were tired of that game.

Lord Augustus. You're excessively trivial, my dear boy, excessively trivial!

Cecil Graham. By the way, Tuppy, which is it? Have you been twice married and once divorced, or twice divorced and once married? I say, you've been twice divorced and once married. It seems so much more probable.

Lord Augustus. I have a very bad memory. I really don't remember which. (*Moves away* R.)

Lady Plymdale. Lord Windermere, I've something most particular to ask you.

Lord Windermere. I'm afraid—if you will excuse me—I must join my wife.

Lady Plymdale. Oh, you mustn't dream of such a thing. It's most dangerous now-a-days for a husband to pay any attention to his wife in public. It always makes people think that he beats her when they're alone. The world has grown so suspicious of anything that looks like a happy married life. But I'll tell you what it is at supper. (*Moves towards door of ballroom*)

Lord Windermere. (C.) Margaret, I *must* speak to you.

Lady Windermere. Will you hold my fan for me, Lord Darlington? Thanks. (*Comes down to him*)

Lord Windermere. (*Crossing to her*) Margaret, what you said before dinner was, of course, impossible?

Lady Windermere. That woman is not coming here to-night!

Lord Windermere. (R. C.) Mrs. Erlynne is coming here, and if you in any way annoy or wound her, you will bring shame and sorrow on us both. Remember that! Ah, Margaret! only trust me! A wife should trust her husband!

Lady Windermere. (C.) London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognize them. They look so thoroughly unhappy. I am not going to be one of them. (*Moves up*) Lord Darlington, will you give me back my fan, please? Thanks. . . . A useful thing, a fan, isn't it? . . . I want a friend to-night, Lord Darlington. I didn't know I would want one so soon.

Lord Darlington. Lady Windermere! I knew the time would come some day; but why to-night?

Lord Windermere. I *will* tell her. I must. It would be terrible if there were any scene. Margaret——

Parker. Mrs. Erlynne. (LORD WINDERMERE *starts.* MRS. ERLYNNE *enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified.* LADY WINDERMERE *clutches at her fan, then lets it drop on the floor. She bows coldly to* MRS. ERLYNNE, *who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room*)

Lord Darlington. You have dropped your fan, Lady Windermere. (*Picks it up and hands it to her*)

Mrs. Erlynne. (C.) How do you do, again, Lord Windermere? How charming your sweet wife looks! Quite a picture!

Lord Windermere. (*In a low voice*) It was terribly rash of you to come!

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Smiling*) The wisest thing I ever did in my life. And, by the way, you must pay me a good deal of attention this evening. I am afraid of the women. You must introduce me to some of them. The men I can always manage. How do you do, Lord Augustus? You have quite neglected me lately. I have not seen you since yesterday. I am afraid you're faithless. Everyone told me so.

Lord Augustus. (R.) Now really, Mrs. Erlynne, allow me to explain.

Mrs. Erlynne. (R. C.) No, dear Lord Augustus, you can't explain anything. It is your chief charm.

Lord Augustus. Ah! if you find charms in me, Mrs. Erlynne—— (*They converse together.* LORD WINDERMERE *moves uneasily about the room, watching* MRS. ERLYNNE)

Lord Darlington. (*To* LADY WINDERMERE). How pale you are!

Lady Windermere. Cowards are always pale.

Lord Darlington. You look faint. Come out on the terrace.

Lady Windermere. Yes. (*To* PARKER) Parker, send my cloak out.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Crossing to her*) Lady Windermere, how beautifully your terrace is illuminated. Reminds me of Prince Doria's at Rome. (LADY WINDERMERE *bows coldly, and goes off with* LORD DARLINGTON) Oh, how do you do, Mr. Graham? Isn't that your aunt, Lady

Jedburgh? I should so much like to know her.

Cecil Graham. (*After a moment's hesitation and embarrassment*) Oh, certainly, if you wish it. Aunt Caroline, allow me to introduce Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. Erlynne. So pleased to meet you, Lady Jedburgh. (*Sits beside her on the sofa*) Your nephew and I are great friends. I am so much interested in his political career. I think he's sure to be a wonderful success. He thinks like a Tory, and talks like a Radical, and that's so important now-a-days. He's such a brilliant talker, too. But we all know from whom he inherits that. Lord Allandale was saying to me only yesterday in the Park that Mr. Graham talks almost as well as his aunt.

Lady Jedburgh. (R.) Most kind of you to say these charming things to me! (MRS. ERLYNNE *smiles and continues conversation*)

Dumby. (*To* CECIL GRAHAM) Did you introduce Mrs. Erlynne to Lady Jedburgh?

Cecil Graham. Had to, my dear fellow. Couldn't help it. That woman can make one do anything she wants. How, I don't know.

Dumby. Hope to goodness she won't speak to me! (*Saunters towards* LADY PLYMDALE)

Mrs. Erlynne. (C. *to* LADY JEDBURGH) On Thursday? With great pleasure. (*Rises and speaks to* LORD WINDERMERE, *laughing*) What a bore it is to have to be civil to these old dowagers. But they always insist on it.

Lady Plymdale. (*To* MR. DUMBY) Who is that well-dressed woman talking to Windermere?

Dumby. Haven't got the slightest idea. Looks like an *edition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

Mrs. Erlynne. So that is poor Dumby with Lady Plymdale? I hear she is frightfully jealous of him. He doesn't seem anxious to speak to me to-night. I suppose he is afraid of her. Those straw-colored women have dreadful tempers. Do you know, I think I'll dance with you first, Windermere. (LORD WINDERMERE *bites his lip and frowns*) It will make Lord Augustus so jealous! Lord Augustus! (LORD AUGUSTUS *comes down*) Lord Windermere insists on my dancing with him first, and, as it's his own house, I can't well refuse. You know I would sooner dance with you.

Lord Augustus. (*With a low bow*) I wish I could think so, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. Erlynne. You know it far too well. I can fancy a person dancing through life with you and finding it charming.

Lord Augustus. (*Placing his hand on his white waistcoat*) Oh, thank you, thank you, thank you. You are the most adorable of all ladies!

Mrs. Erlynne. What a nice speech! So simple and so sincere! Just the sort of speech I like. Well, you shall hold my bouquet. (*Goes towards ballroom on* LORD WINDERMERE'S *arm*) Ah, Mr. Dumby, how are you? I am so sorry I have been out the last three times you have called. Come and lunch on Friday.

Dumby. (*With perfect nonchalance*) Delighted. (LADY PLYMDALE *glares with indignation at* MR. DUMBY. LORD AUGUSTUS *follows* MRS. ERLYNNE *and* LORD WINDERMERE *into the ballroom, holding bouquet*)

Lady Plymdale. (*To* MR. DUMBY) What an absolute brute you are! I never can believe a word you say! Why did you tell me you didn't know her? What do you mean by calling on her three times running? You are not to go to lunch there; of course you understand that?

Dumby. My dear Laura, I wouldn't dream of going!

Lady Plymdale. You haven't told me her name yet! Who is she?

Dumby. (*Coughs slightly and smooths his hair*) She's a Mrs. Erlynne.

Lady Plymdale. *That* woman!

Dumby. Yes, that is what everyone calls her.

Lady Plymdale. How very interesting! How intensely interesting! I really must have a good stare at her. (*Goes to door of ballroom and looks in*) I have heard he most shocking things about her. They say she is ruining poor Windermere. And Lady Windermere, who goes in for being so proper, invites her! How extremely amusing! It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing. You are to lunch there on Friday!

Dumby. Why?

Lady Plymdale. Because I want you to take my husband with you. He has been so attentive lately that he has become a perfect nuisance. Now this woman is just the thing for him. He'll dance attendance upon her as long as she lets him, and won't bother me. I assure you, women of that kind are most useful. They form the basis of other people's marriages.

Dumby. What a mystery you are!

Lady Plymdale. (*Looking at him*) I wish *you* were!

Dumby. I am—to myself. I am the only person in the world I should like to know thoroughly; but I don't see any chance of it just at present. (*They pass into the ballroom, and* LADY WINDERMERE *and* LORD DARLINGTON *enter from the terrace*)

Lady Windermere. Yes. Her coming here is monstrous, unbearable. I know now what you meant to-day at tea time. Why didn't you tell me right out? You should have.

Lord Darlington. I couldn't. A man can't tell these things about another man. But if I had known he was going to make you ask her to-night, I think I would have told you. That insult, at any rate, you would have been spared.

Lady Windermere. I did not ask her. He insisted on her coming—against my entreaties—against my commands. Oh! the house is tainted for me! I feel that every woman here sneers at me as she dances by with my husband. What have I done to deserve this? I gave him all my life. He took it—used it—spoiled it! I am degraded in my own eyes; and I lack courage—I am a coward! (*Sits down on sofa*)

Lord Darlington. If I know you at all, I know that you can't live with a man who treats you like this. What sort of life would you have with him? You would feel that he was lying to you every moment of the day. You would feel that the look in his eyes was false, his voice false, his touch false, his passion false. He would come to you when he was weary of others; you would have to comfort him. He would come to you when he was devoted to others; you would have to charm him. You would have to be to him the mask of his real life, the cloak to hide his secret.

Lady Windermere. You are right—you are terribly right. But where am I to turn? You said you would be my friend, Lord Darlington.—Tell me, what am I to do? Be my friend now.

Lord Darlington. Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship. I love you——

Lady Windermere. No, no! (*Rises*)

Lord Darlington. Yes, I love you! You are more to me than anything in the whole world. What does your husband give you? Nothing. Whatever is in him he gives to this wretched woman, whom he has thrust into your society, into your

home, to shame you before everyone. I offer you my life——

Lady Windermere. Lord Darlington!

Lord Darlington. My life—my whole life. Take it, and do with it what you will. . . . I love you—love you as I have never loved any living thing. From the moment I met you I loved you, loved you blindly, adoringly, madly! You did not know it then—you know it now! Leave this house to-night. I won't tell you that the world matters nothing, or the world's voice, or the voice of society. They matter a good deal. They matter far too much. But there are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely—or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands. You have that moment now. Choose! Oh, my love, choose!

Lady Windermere. (*Moving slowly away from him and looking at him with startled eyes*) I have not the courage.

Lord Darlington. (*Following her*) Yes; you have the courage. There may be six months of pain, of disgrace even, but when you no longer bear his name, when you bear mine, all will be well. Margaret, my love, my wife that shall be some day—yes, my wife! You know it! What are you now? This woman has the place that belongs by right to you. Oh, go—go out of this house, with head erect, with a smile upon your lips, with courage in your eyes. All London will know why you did it; and who will blame you? No one. If they do, what matter? Wrong? What is wrong? It's wrong for a man to abandon his wife for a shameless woman. It is wrong for a wife to remain with a man who so dishonors her. You said once you would make no compromise with things. Make none now. Be brave! Be yourself!

Lady Windermere. I am afraid of being myself. Let me think! Let me wait! My husband may return to me. (*Sits down on sofa*)

Lord Darlington. And you would take him back! You are not what I thought you were. You are just the same as every other woman. You would stand anything rather than face the censure of a world, whose praise you would despise. In a week you will be driving with this woman in the Park. She will be your constant guest—your dearest friend. You would endure anything rather than break with one blow this monstrous lie. You are right. You have no courage; none!

Lady Windermere. Ah, give me time to think. I cannot answer you now. (*Passes her hand nervously over her brow*)

Lord Darlington. It must be now or not at all.

Lady Windermere. (*Rising from the sofa*) Then not at all! (*A pause*)

Lord Darlington. You break my heart!

Lady Windermere. Mine is already broken. (*A pause*)

Lord Darlington. To-morrow I leave England. This is the last time I shall ever look on you. You will never see me again. For one moment our lives met—our souls touched. They must never meet or touch again. Good-by, Margaret.

(*Exit*)

Lady Windermere. How alone I am in life! How terribly alone! (*The music stops. Enter the* DUCHESS OF BERWICK *and* LORD PLYMDALE, *laughing and talking. Other guests come on from the ballroom*)

Duchess of Berwick. Dear Margaret, I've just been having such a delightful chat with Mrs. Erlynne. I am so sorry for what I said to you this afternoon about her. Of course she must be all right if *you* invite her. A most attractive woman, and has such sensible views on life. Told me she entirely disapproved of people marrying more than once, so I feel quite

safe about poor Augustus. Can't imagine why people speak against her. It's those horrid nieces of mine—the Saville girls—they're always talking scandal. Still, I should go to Homburg, dear, I really should. She is just a little too attractive. But where is Agatha? Oh, there she is. (LADY AGATHA *and* MR. HOPPER *enter from the terrace* L. U. E.) Mr. Hopper, I am very angry with you. You have taken Agatha out on the terrace, and she is so delicate.

Hopper. (L. C.) Awfully sorry, Duchess. We went out for a moment and then got chatting together.

Duchess of Berwick. (C.) Ah, about dear Australia, I suppose.

Hopper. Yes.

Duchess of Berwick. Agatha, darling! (*Beckons her over*)

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma!

Duchess of Berwick. (Aside) Did Mr. Hopper definitely——

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. And what answer did you give him, dear child?

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma.

Duchess of Berwick. (*Affectionately*) My dear one! You always say the right thing. Mr. Hopper! James! Agatha has told me everything. How cleverly you have both kept your secret!

Hopper. You don't mind my taking Agatha off to Australia, then, Duchess?

Duchess of Berwick. (*Indignantly*) To Australia? Oh, don't mention that dreadful, vulgar place.

Hopper. But she said she'd like to come with me.

Duchess of Berwick. (*Severely*) Did you say that, Agatha?

Lady Agatha. Yes, Mamma!

Duchess of Berwick. Agatha, you say the most silly things possible. I think on the whole that Grosvenor Square would be a more healthy place to reside in. There are lots of vulgar people live in Grosvenor Square, but at any rate there are no horrid kangaroos crawling about. But we'll talk about that to-morrow. James, you can take Agatha down. You'll come to lunch, of course, James. At half-past one instead of two. The Duke will wish to say a few words to you, I am sure.

Hopper. I should like to have a chat with the Duke, Duchess. He has not said a single word to me yet.

Duchess of Berwick. I think you'll find he will have a great deal to say to you to-morrow. (*Exit* LADY AGATHA *with* MR. HOPPER) And now good-night, Margaret. I'm afraid it's the old story, dear. Love—well, not love at first sight, but love at the end of the season, which is so much more satisfactory.

Lady Windermere. Good-night, Duchess.

(*Exit the* DUCHESS OF BERWICK *on* LORD PLYMDALE'S *arm*)

Lady Plymdale. My dear Margaret, what a handsome woman your husband has been dancing with! I should be quite jealous if I were you! Is she a great friend of yours?

Lady Windermere. No!

Lady Plymdale. Really? Good-night, dear. (*Looks at* MR. DUMBY *and exit*)

Dumby. Awful manners young Hopper has!

Cecil Graham. Ah! Hopper is one of Nature's gentlemen, the worst type of gentleman I know.

Dumby. Sensible woman, Lady Windermere. Lots of wives would have objected to Mrs. Erlynne coming. But Lady Windermere has that uncommon thing called common sense.

Cecil Graham. And Windermere knows that nothing looks so like innocence as an indiscretion.

Dumby. Yes; dear Windermere is becoming almost modern. Never thought

he would (*Bows to* LADY WINDERMERE *and exit*)

Lady Jedburgh. Good-night, Lady Windermere. What a fascinating woman Mrs. Erlynne is! She is coming to lunch on Thursday. Won't you come too? I expect the Bishop and dear Lady Merton.

Lady Windermere. I am afraid I am engaged, Lady Jedburgh.

Lady Jedburgh. So sorry. Come, dear. (*Exeunt* LADY JEDBURGH *and* MISS GRAHAM)

(*Enter* MRS. ERLYNNE *and* LORD WINDERMERE)

Mrs. Erlynne. Charming ball it has been! Quite reminds me of old days. (*Sits on the sofa*) And I see that there are just as many fools in society as there used to be. So pleased to find that nothing has altered! Except Margaret. She's grown quite pretty. The last time I saw her—twenty years ago, she was a fright in flannel. Positive fright, I assure you. The dear Duchess! and that sweet Lady Agatha! Just the type of girl I like! Well, really, Windermere, if I am to be the Duchess's sister-in-law——

Lord Windermere. (*Sitting* L. *of her*) But are you——

(*Exit* MR. CECIL GRAHAM *with rest of guests.* LADY WINDERMERE *watches with a look of scorn and pain* MRS. ERLYNNE *and her husband. They are unconscious of her presence*)

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, yes! He's to call to-morrow at twelve o'clock. He wanted to propose to-night. In fact he did. He kept on proposing. Poor Augustus, you know how he repeats himself. Such a bad habit! But I told him I wouldn't give him an answer till to-morrow. Of course I am going to take him. And I dare say I'll make him an admirable wife, as wives go. And there is a great deal of good in Lord Augustus. Fortunately it is all on the surface. Just where good qualities should be. Of course you must help me in this matter.

Lord Windermere. I am not called on to encourage Lord Augustus, I suppose?

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, no! I do the encouraging. But you will make me a handsome settlement, Windermere, won't you?

Lord Windermere. (*Frowning*) Is that what you want to talk to me about to-night?

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes.

Lord Windermere. (*With a gesture of impatience*) I will not talk of it here.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Laughing*) Then we will talk of it on the terrace. Even business should have a picturesque background. Should it not, Windermere? With a proper background women can do anything.

Lord Windermere. Won't to-morrow do as well?

Mrs. Erlynne. No; you see, to-morrow I am going to accept him. And I think it would be a good thing if I was able to tell him that—well, what shall I say?—£2,000 a year left to me by a third cousin—or a second husband—or some distant relative of that kind. It would be an additional attraction, wouldn't it? You have a delightful opportunity now of paying me a compliment, Windermere. But you are not very clever at paying compliments. I am afraid Margaret doesn't encourage you in that excellent habit. It's a great mistake on her part. When men give up saying what is charming, they give up thinking what is charming. But seriously, what do you say to £2,000? £2,500, I think. In modern life margin is everything. Windermere, don't you think the world an intensely amusing place? I do!

(*Exit on terrace with* LORD WINDERMERE. *Music strikes up in ballroom*)

Lady Windermere. To stay in this house any longer is impossible. To-night

a man who loves me offered me his whole life. I refused it. It was foolish of me. I will offer him mine now. I will give him mine. I will go to him! (*Puts on cloak and goes to door, then turns back. Sits down at table and writes a letter, puts it into an envelope, and leaves it on table*) Arthur has never understood me. When he reads this he will. He may do as he chooses now with his life. I have done with mine as I think best, as I think right. It is he who has broken the bond of marriage—not I. I only break its bondage. (*Exit*)

(PARKER *enters* L. *and crosses towards the ballroom* R. *Enter* MRS. ERLYNNE)

Mrs. Erlynne. Is Lady Windermere in the ballroom?

Parker. Her ladyship has just gone out.

Mrs. Erlynne. Gone out? She's not on the terrace?

Parker. No, madam. Her ladyship has just gone out of the house.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Starts, and looks at the servant with a puzzled expression on her face*) Out of the house?

Parker. Yes, madam—her ladyship told me she had left a letter for his lordship on the table.

Mrs. Erlynne. A letter for Lord Windermere?

Parker. Yes, madam.

Mrs. Erlynne. Thank you (*Exit* PARKER. *The music in the ballroom stops*) Gone out of her house! A letter addressed to her husband! (*Goes over to bureau and looks at letter. Takes it up and lays it down again with a shudder of fear*) No, no! It would be impossible! Life doesn't repeat its tragedies like that! Oh, why does this horrible fancy come across me? Why do I remember now the one moment of my life I most wish to forget? Does life repeat its tragedies? (*Tears letter open and reads it, then sinks down into a chair with a gesture of anguish*) Oh, how terrible! The same words that twenty years ago I wrote to her father! and how bitterly I have been punished for it! No; my punishment is to-night, is now! (*Still seated* R.)

(*Enter* LORD WINDERMERE L. U. E.)

Lord Windermere. Have you said good-night to my wife? (*Comes* C.)

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Crushing letter in her hand*) Yes.

Lord Windermere. Where is she?

Mrs. Erlynne. She is very tired. She has gone to bed. She said she had a headache.

Lord Windermere. I must go to her. You'll excuse me?

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Rising hurriedly*) Oh, no! It's nothing serious. She's only very tired, that is all. Besides, there are people still in the supper-room. She wants you to make her apologies to them. She said she didn't wish to be disturbed. (*Drops letter*) She asked me to tell you.

Lord Windermere. (*Picks up letter*) You have dropped something.

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, yes, thank you, that is mine. (*Puts out her hand to take it*)

Lord Windermere. (*Still looking at letter*) But it's my wife's handwriting, isn't it?

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Takes the letter quickly*) Yes, it's—an address. Will you ask them to call my carriage, please?

Lord Windermere. Certainly. (*Goes* L. *and exit*)

Mrs. Erlynne. Thanks. What can I do? What can I do? I feel a passion awakening within me that I never felt before. What can it mean? The daughter must not be like the mother—that would be terrible. How can I save her? How can I save my child? A moment may ruin a life. Who knows that better

than I? Windermere must be got out of the house; that is absolutely necessary. (*Goes* L.) But how shall I do it? It must be done somehow. Ah!

(*Enter* LORD AUGUSTUS R. U. E., *carrying bouquet*)

Lord Augustus. Dear lady, I am in such suspense! May I not have an answer to my request?

Mrs. Erlynne. Lord Augustus, listen to me. You are to take Lord Windermere down to your club at once, and keep him there as long as possible. You understand?

Lord Augustus. But you said you wished me to keep early hours!

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Nervously*) Do what I tell you. Do what I tell you.

Lord Augustus. And my reward?

Mrs. Erlynne. Your reward? Your reward? Oh! ask me that to-morrow. But don't let Windermere out of your sight to-night. If you do I will never forgive you. I will never speak to you again. I'll have nothing to do with you. Remember, you are to keep Windermere at your club, and don't let him come back to-night. (*Exit*)

Lord Augustus. Well, really, I might be her husband already. Positively I might. (*Follows her in a bewildered manner*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—LORD DARLINGTON'S *rooms. A large sofa is in front of fireplace* R. *At the back of the stage a curtain is drawn across the window Doors* L. *and* R. *Table* R. *with writing materials. Table* C. *with syphons, glasses, and Tantalus frame. Table* L. *with cigar and cigarette box. Lamps lit.*

Lady Windermere. (*Standing by the fireplace*) Why doesn't he come? This waiting is horrible. He should be here. Why is he not here, to wake by passionate words some fire within me? I am cold—cold as a loveless thing. Arthur must have read my letter by this time. If he cared for me, he would have come after me, would have taken me back by force. But he doesn't care. He's entrammeled by this woman—fascinated by her—dominated by her. If a woman wants to hold a man, she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men, and they leave us. Others make brutes of them and they fawn and are faithful. How hideous life is! . . . Oh! it was mad of me to come here, horribly mad. And yet which is the worst, I wonder, to be at the mercy of a man who loves one, or the wife of a man who in one's own house dishonors one? What woman knows? What woman in the whole world? But will he love me always, this man to whom I am giving my life? What do I bring him? Lips that have lost the note of joy, eyes that are blighted by tears, chill hands and icy heart. I bring him nothing. I must go back—no; I can't go back, my letter has put me in their power—Arthur would not take me back! That fatal letter! No! Lord Darlington leaves England to-morrow. I will go with him—I have no choice. (*Sits down for a few moments. Then starts up and puts on her cloak*) No, no! I will go back, let Arthur do with me what he pleases. I can't wait here. It has been madness my coming. I must go at once. As for Lord Darlington—Oh! here he is! What shall I do? What can I say to him? Will he let me go away at all? I have heard that men are brutal, horrible. . . . Oh! (*Hides her face in her hands*)

(*Enter* MRS. ERLYNNE L.)

Mrs. Erlynne. Lady Windermere!

(LADY WINDERMERE *starts and looks up. Then recoils in contempt*) Thank heaven I am in time. You must go back to your husband's house immediately.

Lady Windermere. Must?

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Authoritatively*) Yes, you must! There is not a second to be lost. Lord Darlington may return at any moment.

Lady Windermere. Don't come near me.

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, you are on the brink of ruin: you are on the brink of a hideous precipice. You must leave this place at once. My carriage is waiting at the corner of the street. You must come with me and drive straight home. (LADY WINDERMERE *throws off her cloak and flings it on the sofa*) What are you doing?

Lady Windermere. Mrs. Erlynne—if you had not come here, I would have gone back. But now that I see you, I feel that nothing in the whole world would induce me to live under the same roof as Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror. There is something about you that stirs the wildest rage within me. And I know why you are here. My husband sent you to lure me back that I might serve as a blind to whatever relations exist between you and him.

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh! you don't think that—you can't.

Lady Windermere. Go back to my husband, Mrs. Erlynne. He belongs to you and not to me. I suppose he is afraid of a scandal. Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue. But he had better prepare himself. He shall have a scandal. He shall have the worst scandal there has been in London for years. He shall see his name in every vile paper, mine on every hideous placard.

Mrs. Erlynne. No—no——

Lady Windermere. Yes, he shall! Had he come himself, I admit I would have gone back to the life of degradation you and he had prepared for me—I was going back—but to stay himself at home, and to send you as his messenger—oh! it was infamous—infamous!

Mrs. Erlynne. (C.) Lady Windermere you wrong me horribly—you wrong your husband horribly. He doesn't know you are here—he thinks you are safe in your own house. He thinks you are asleep in your own room. He never read the mad letter you wrote to him!

Lady Windermere. (R.) Never read it!

Mrs. Erlynne. No—he knows nothing about it!

Lady Windermere. How simple you think me! (*Going to her*) You are lying to me!

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Restraining herself*) I am not. I am telling you the truth.

Lady Windermere. If my husband didn't read my letter, how is it that you are here? Who told you I had left the house you were shameless enough to enter? Who told you where I had gone to? My husband told you, and sent you to decoy me back. (*Crosses* L.)

Mrs. Erlynne. (R. C.) Your husband has never seen the letter. I—saw it, I opened it. I—read it.

Lady Windermere. (*Turning to her*) You opened a letter of mine to my husband? You wouldn't dare!

Mrs. Erlynne. Dare! Oh! to save you from the abyss into which you are falling, there is nothing in the world I would not dare, nothing in the whole world. Here is the letter. Your husband has never read it. He never shall read it. (*Going to fireplace*) It should never have been written. (*Tears it and throws it into the fire*)

Lady Windermere. (*With infinite contempt in her voice and look*) How do I

know that that was my letter after all? You seem to think the commonest device can take me in!

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh! why do you disbelieve everything I tell you! What object do you think I have in coming here, except to save you from utter ruin, to save you from the consequence of a hideous mistake? That letter that is burning now *was* your letter. I swear it to you!

Lady Windermere. (*Slowly*) You took good care to burn it before I had examined it. I cannot trust you. You, whose whole life is a lie, how could you speak the truth about anything? (*Sits down*)

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Hurriedly*) Think as you like about me—say what you choose against me, but go back, go back to the husband you love.

Lady Windermere. (*Sullenly*) I do *not* love him!

Mrs. Erlynne. You do, and you know that he loves you.

Lady Windermere. He does not understand what love is. He understands it as little as you do—but I see what you want. It would be a great advantage for you to get me back. Dear Heaven! what a life I would have then! Living at the mercy of a woman who has neither mercy nor pity in her, a woman whom it is an infamy to meet, a degradation to know, a vile woman, a woman who comes between husband and wife!

Mrs. Erlynne. (*With a gesture of despair*) Lady Windermere, Lady Windermere, don't say such terrible things. You don't know how terrible they are, how terrible and how unjust. Listen, you must listen! Only go back to your husband, and I promise you never to communicate with him again on any pretext —never to see him—never to have anything to do with his life or yours. The money that he gave me, he gave me not through love, but through hatred, not in worship, but in contempt. The hold I have over him——

Lady Windermere. (*Rising*) Ah! you admit you have a hold!

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes, and I will tell you what it is. It is his love for you, Lady Windermere.

Lady Windermere. You expect me to believe that?

Mrs. Erlynne. You must believe it! It is true. It is his love for you that has made him submit to—oh! call it what you like, tyranny, threats, anything you choose. But it is his love for you. His desire to spare you shame, yes, shame and disgrace.

Lady Windermere. What do you mean? You are insolent! What have I to do with you?

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Humbly*) Nothing. I know it—but I tell you that your husband loves you—that you may never meet with such love again in your whole life—that such love you will never meet—and that if you throw it away, the day may come when you will starve for love and it will not be given to you, beg for love and it will be denied you—— Oh! Arthur loves you!

Lady Windermere. Arthur? And you tell me there is nothing between you?

Mrs. Erlynne. Lady Windermere, before Heaven your husband is guiltless of all offense towards you! And I—I tell you that had it ever occurred to me that such a monstrous suspicion would have entered your mind, I would have died rather than have crossed your life or his —oh! died, gladly died! (*Moves away to sofa* R.)

Lady Windermere. You talk as if you had a heart. Women like you have no hearts. Heart is not in you. You are bought and sold. (*Sits* L. C.)

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Starts, with a gesture of pain. Then restrains herself, and*

comes over to where LADY WINDERMERE *is sitting. As she speaks, she stretches out her hands towards her, but does not dare to touch her.*) Believe what you choose about me. I am not worth a moment's sorrow. But don't spoil your beautiful young life on my account! You don't know what may be in store for you, unless you leave this house at once. You don't know what it is to fall into the pit, to be despised, mocked, abandoned, sneered at—to be an outcast! to find the door shut against one, to have to creep in by hideous byways, afraid every moment lest the mask should be stripped from one's face, and all the while to hear the laughter, the horrible laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed. You don't know what it is. One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays. You must never know that. —As for me, if suffering be an expiation, then at this moment I have expiated all my faults, whatever they have been; for to-night you have made a heart in one who had it not—made it and broken it—but let that pass. I may have wrecked my own life, but I will not let you wreck yours. You—why, you are a mere girl, you would be lost. You haven't got the kind of brains that enables a woman to get back. You have neither the wit nor the courage. You couldn't stand dishonor. No! Go back, Lady Windermere, to the husband who loves you, whom you love. You have a child, Lady Windermere. Go back to that child who even now, in pain or in joy, may be calling to you. (LADY WINDERMERE *rises*) God gave you that child. He will require from you that you make his life fine, that you watch over him. What answer will you make to God if his life is ruined through you? Back to your house, Lady Windermere—your husband loves you. He has never swerved for a moment from the love he bears you. But even if he had a thousand loves, you must stay with your child. If he was harsh to you, you must stay with your child. If he ill-treated you, you must stay with your child. If he abandoned you, your place is with your child. (LADY WINDERMERE *bursts into tears and buries her face in her hands*) (*Rushing to her*) Lady Windermere!

Lady Windermere. (*Holding out her hands to her, helplessly, as a child might do*) Take me home. Take me home.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Is about to embrace her. Then restrains herself. There is a look of wonderful joy in her face*) Come! Where is your cloak? (*Getting it from sofa*) Here. Put it on. Come at once! (*They go to the door*)

Lady Windermere. Stop! Don't you hear voices?

Mrs. Erlynne. No, no. There is no one.

Lady Windermere. Yes, there is! Listen! Oh, that is my husband's voice! He is coming in! Save me! Oh, it's some plot! You have sent for him (*Voices outside*)

Mrs. Erlynne. Silence! I am here to save you if I can. But I fear it is too late! There! (*Points to the curtain across the window*) The first chance you have, slip out, if you ever get a chance!

Lady Windermere. But you!

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, never mind me. I'll face them. (LADY WINDERMERE *hides herself behind the curtain*)

Lord Augustus. (*Outside*) Nonsense, dear Windermere, you must not leave me!

Mrs. Erlynne. Lord Augustus! Then it is I who am lost. (*Hesitates for a moment, then looks round and sees door* R., *and exit through it*)

(*Enter* LORD DARLINGTON, MR. DUMBY, LORD WINDERMERE, LORD AUGUSTUS LORTON, *and* MR. CECIL GRAHAM)

Dumby. What a nuisance their turn-

ing us out of the club at this hour! It's only two o'clock. (*Sinks into a chair*) The lively part of the evening is only just beginning. (*Yawns and closes his eyes*)

Lord Windermere. It is very good of you, Lord Darlington, allowing Augustus to force our company on you, but I'm afraid I can't stay long.

Lord Darlington. Really! I am so sorry! You'll take a cigar, won't you?

Lord Windermere. Thanks! (*Sits down*)

Lord Augustus (*to* LORD WINDERMERE) My dear boy, you must not dream of going. I have a great deal to talk to you about of demmed importance, too. (*Sits down with him at* L. *table*)

Cecil Graham. Oh, we all know what that is! Tuppy can't talk about anything but Mrs. Erlynne!

Lord Windermere. Well, that is no business of yours, is it, Cecil?

Cecil Graham. None. That is why it interests me. My own business always bores me to death. I prefer other people's.

Lord Darlington. Have something to drink, you fellows. Cecil, you'll have a whiskey and soda?

Cecil Graham. Thanks. (*Goes to the table with* LORD DARLINGTON) Mrs. Erlynne looked very handsome to-night, didn't she?

Lord Darlington. I am not one of her admirers.

Cecil Graham. I usedn't to be, but I am now. Why, she actually made me introduce her to poor dear Aunt Caroline. I believe she is going to lunch there.

Lord Darlington. (*In surprise*) No?

Cecil Graham. She is, really.

Lord Darlington. Excuse me, you fellows. I'm going away to-morrow. And I have to write a few letters. (*Goes to writing table and sits down*)

Dumby. Clever woman, Mrs. Erlynne.

Cecil Graham. Hallo, Dumby! I thought you were asleep.

Dumby. I am, I usually am!

Lord Augustus. A very clever woman. Knows perfectly well what a demmed fool I am—knows it as well as I do myself. (CECIL GRAHAM *comes towards him laughing*) Ah! you may laugh, my boy, but it is a great thing to come across a woman who thoroughly understands one.

Dumby. It is an awfully dangerous thing. They always end by marrying one.

Cecil Graham. But I thought, Tuppy, you were never going to see her again. Yes, you told me so yesterday evening at the club. You said you'd heard—— (*Whispering to him*)

Lord Augustus. Oh, she's explained that.

Cecil Graham. And the Wiesbaden affair?

Lord Augustus. She's explained that, too.

Dumby. And her income, Tuppy? Has she explained that?

Lord Augustus. (*In a very serious voice*) She's going to explain that to-morrow. (CECIL GRAHAM *goes back to* C. *table*)

Dumby. Awfully commercial, women now-a-days. Our grandmothers threw their caps over the mills, of course, but, by Jove, their granddaughters only throw their caps over mills that can raise the wind for them.

Lord Augustus. You want to make her out a wicked woman. She is not!

Cecil Graham. Oh! Wicked women bother one. Good women bore one. That is the only difference between them.

Lord Darlington. (*Puffing a cigar*) Mrs. Erlynne has a future before her.

Dumby. Mrs. Erlynne has a past before her.

Lord Augustus. I prefer women with a past. They're always so demmed amusing to talk to.

Cecil Graham. Well, you'll have lots of topics of conversation with *her,* Tuppy. (*Rising and going to him*)

Lord Augustus. You're getting annoying, dear boy; you're getting demmed annoying.

Cecil Graham. (*Puts his hands on his shoulders*) Now, Tuppy, you've lost your figure and you've lost your character. Don't lose your temper; you have only got one.

Lord Augustus. My dear boy, if I wasn't the most good-natured man in London——

Cecil Graham. We'd treat you with more respect, wouldn't we, Tuppy? (*Strolls away*)

Dumby. The youth of the present day are quite monstrous. They have absolutely no respect for dyed hair. (LORD AUGUSTUS *looks round angrily*)

Cecil Graham. Mrs. Erlynne has a very great respect for dear Tuppy.

Dumby. Then Mrs. Erlynne sets an admirable example to the rest of her sex. It is perfectly brutal the way most women now-a-days behave to men who are not their husbands.

Lord Windermere. Dumby, you are ridiculous, and, Cecil, you let your tongue run away with you. You must leave Mrs. Erlynne alone. You don't really know anything about her, and you're always talking scandal against her.

Cecil Graham. (*Coming towards him* L. C.) My dear Arthur, *I* never talk scandal. *I* only talk gossip.

Lord Windermere. What is the difference between scandal and gossip?

Cecil Graham. Oh, gossip is charming! History is merely gossip. But scandal is gossip made tedious by morality. Now I never moralize. A man who moralizes is usually a hypocrite, and a woman who moralizes is invariably plain. There is nothing in the whole world so unbecoming to a woman as a Nonconformist conscience. And most women know it, I'm glad to say.

Lord Augustus. Just my sentiments, dear boy, just my sentiments.

Cecil Graham. Sorry to hear it, Tuppy; whenever people agree with me, I always feel I must be wrong.

Lord Augustus. My dear boy, when I was your age——

Cecil Graham. But you never were, Tuppy, and you never will be. (*Goes up* C.) I say, Darlington, let us have some cards. You'll play, Arthur, won't you?

Lord Windermere. No, thanks, Cecil.

Dumby. (*With a sigh*) Good heavens! how marriage ruins a man. It's as demoralizing as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

Cecil Graham. You'll play, of course, Tuppy?

Lord Augustus. (*Pouring himself out a brandy and soda at table*) Can't, dear boy. Promised Mrs. Erlynne never to play or drink again.

Cecil Graham. Now, my dear Tuppy, don't be led astray into the paths of virtue. Reformed, you would be perfectly tedious. That is the worst of women. They always want one to be good. And if we are good, when they meet us, they don't love us at all. They like to find us quite irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good.

Lord Darlington. (*Rising from* R. *table, where he has been writing letters*) They always do find us bad!

Dumby. I don't think we are bad. I think we are all good except Tuppy.

Lord Darlington. No, we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. (*Sits down at* C. *table*)

Dumby. We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars? Upon my word, you are very romantic to-night, Darlington.

Cecil Graham. Too romantic! You must be in love. Who is the girl?

Lord Darlington. The woman I love is not free, or thinks she isn't. (*Glances instinctively at* LORD WINDERMERE *while he speaks*)

Cecil Graham. A married woman, then! Well, there's nothing in the world like the devotion of a married woman. It's a thing no married man knows anything about.

Lord Darlington. Oh, she doesn't love me. She is a good woman. She is the only good woman I have ever met in my life.

Cecil Graham. The only good woman you have ever met in your life?

Lord Darlington. Yes.

Cecil Graham. (*Lighting a cigarette*) Well, you are a lucky fellow! Why, I have met hundreds of good women. I never seem to meet any but good women. The world is perfectly packed with good women. To know them is a middle-class education.

Lord Darlington. This woman has purity and innocence. She has everything we men have lost.

Cecil Graham. My dear fellow, what on earth should we men do going about with purity and innocence? A carefully thought-out buttonhole is much more effective.

Dumby. She doesn't really love you, then?

Lord Darlington. No, she does not!

Dumby. I congratulate you, my dear fellow. In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst, the last is a real tragedy! But I am interested to hear she does not love you. How long could you love a woman who didn't love you, Cecil?

Cecil Graham. A woman who didn't love me? Oh, all my life!

Dumby. So could I. But it's so difficult to meet one.

Lord Darlington. How can you be so conceited, Dumby?

Dumby. I didn't say it as a matter of conceit. I said it as a matter of regret. I have been wildly, madly adored. I am sorry I have. It has been an immense nuisance. I should like to be allowed a little time to myself now and then.

Lord Augustus. (*Looking round*) Time to educate yourself, I suppose.

Dumby. No, time to forget all I have learned. That is much more important, dear Tuppy.

(LORD AUGUSTUS *moves uneasily in his chair*)

Lord Darlington. What cynics you fellows are!

Cecil Graham. What is a cyinic? (*Sitting on the back of the sofa*)

Lord Darlington. A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

Cecil Graham. And a sentimentalist, my dear Darlington, is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

Lord Darlington. You always amuse me, Cecil. You talk as if you were a man of experience.

Cecil Graham. I am. (*Moves up to front of fireplace*)

Lord Darlington. You are far too young!

Cecil Graham. That is a great error. Experience is a question of instinct about life. I have got it. Tuppy hasn't. Experience is the name Tuppy gives to his mistakes. That is all.

(LORD AUGUSTUS *looks round indignantly*)

Dumby. Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

Cecil Graham. (*Standing with his back to fireplace*) One shouldn't commit

any. (*Sees* LADY WINDERMERE'S *fan on sofa*)

Dumby. Life would be very dull without them.

Cecil Graham. Of course you are quite faithful to this woman you are in love with, Darlington, to this good woman?

Lord Darlington. Cecil, if one really loves a woman, all other women in the world become absolutely meaningless to one. Love changes one—I am changed.

Cecil Graham. Dear me! How very interesting! Tuppy, I want to talk to you. (LORD AUGUSTUS *takes no notice*)

Dumby. It's no use talking to Tuppy. You might just as well talk to a brick wall.

Cecil Graham. But I like talking to a brick wall—it's the only thing in the world that never contradicts me! Tuppy!

Lord Augustus. Well, what is it? What is it? (*Rising and going over to* CECIL GRAHAM)

Cecil Graham. Come over here. I want you particularly. (*Aside*) Darlington has been moralizing and talking about the purity of love, and that sort of thing, and he has got some woman in his rooms all the time.

Lord Augustus. No, really! really!

Cecil Graham. (*In a low voice*) Yes, here is her fan. (*Points to the fan*)

Lord Augustus. (*Chuckling*) By Jove! By Jove!

Lord Windermere. (*Up by door*) I am really off now, Lord Darlington. I am sorry you are leaving England so soon. Pray call on us when you come back! My wife and I will be charmed to see you!

Lord Darlington. (UP *stage with* LORD WINDERMERE) I am afraid I shall be away for many years. Goodnight.

Cecil Graham. Arthur!

Lord Windermere. What?

Cecil Graham. I want to speak to you for a moment. No, do come!

Lord Windermere. (*Putting on his coat*) I can't—I'm off!

Cecil Graham. It is something very particular. It will interest you enormously.

Lord Windermere. (*Smiling*) It is some of your nonsense, Cecil.

Cecil Graham. It isn't! It isn't really!

Lord Augustus. (*Going to him*) My dear fellow, you mustn't go yet. I have a lot to talk to you about. And Cecil has something to show you.

Lord Windermere. (*Walking over*) Well, what is it?

Cecil Graham. Darlington has got a woman here in his rooms. Here is her fan. Amusing, isn't it? (*A pause*)

Lord Windermere. Good God! (*Seizes the fan*—DUMBY *rises*)

Cecil Graham. What is the matter?

Lord Windermere. Lord Darlington!

Lord Darlington. (*Turning round*) Yes!

Lord Windermere. What is my wife's fan doing here in your rooms? Hands off, Cecil! Don't touch me!

Lord Darlington. Your wife's fan?

Lord Windermere. Yes, here it is!

Lord Darlington. (*Walking towards him*) I don't know!

Lord Windermere. You must know. I demand an explanation! Don't hold me, you fool! (*To* CECIL GRAHAM)

Lord Darlington. (*Aside*) She is here after all!

Lord Windermere. Speak, sir! Why is my wife's fan here? Answer me, by God! I'll search your rooms, and if my wife's here I'll—— (*Moves*)

Lord Darlington. You shall not search my rooms. You have no right to do so. I forbid you.

Lord Windermere. You scoundrel! I'll not leave your room till I have searched every corner of it. What moves behind that curtain? (*Rushes towards curtain* C.)

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Enters behind* R.) Lord Windermere!

Lord Windermere. Mrs. Erlynne!

(*Everyone starts and turns round.* LADY WINDERMERE *slips out from behind the curtain and glides from the room* L.)

Mrs. Erlynne. I am afraid I took your wife's fan in mistake for my own, when I was leaving your house to-night. I am so sorry. (*Takes fan from him.* LORD WINDERMERE *looks at her in contempt.* LORD DARLINGTON *in mingled astonishment and anger.* LORD AUGUSTUS *turns away. The other men smile at each other*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE.—*Same as in* ACT I

Lady Windermere. (*Lying on sofa*) How can I tell him? I can't tell him. It would kill me. I wonder what happened after I escaped from that horrible room. Perhaps she told them the true reason of her being there, and the real meaning of that—fatal fan of mine. Oh, if he knows —how can I look him in the face again! He would never forgive me. (*Touches bell*) How securely one thinks one lives—out of reach of temptation, sin, folly. And then suddenly—— Oh! Life is terrible. It rules us, we do not rule it.

(*Enter* ROSALIE R.)

Rosalie. Did your ladyship ring for me?

Lady Windermere. Yes. Have you found out at what time Lord Windermere came in last night?

Rosalie. His lordship did not come in till five o'clock.

Lady Windermere. Five o'clock! He knocked at my door this morning, didn't he?

Rosalie. Yes, my lady—at half-past nine. I told him your ladyship was not awake yet.

Lady Windermere. Did he say anything?

Rosalie. Something about your ladyship's fan. I didn't quite catch what his lordship said. Has the fan been lost, my lady? I can't find it, and Parker says it was not left in any of the rooms. He has looked in all of them and on the terrace as well.

Lady Windermere. It doesn't matter. Tell Parker not to trouble. That will do.

(*Exit* ROSALIE)

Lady Windermere. (*Rising*) She is sure to tell him. I can fancy a person doing a wonderful act of self-sacrifice, doing it spontaneously, recklessly, nobly —and afterwards finding out that it costs too much. Why should she hesitate between her ruin and mine? . . . How strange! I would have publicly disgraced her in my own house. She accepts public disgrace in the house of another to save me. . . . There is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women. . . . Oh, what a lesson! and what a pity that in life we only get our lessons when they are of no use to us! For even if she doesn't tell, I must. Oh! the shame of it, the shame of it! To tell it is to live through it all again. Actions are the first tragedy in life, words are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless. . . . Oh! (*Starts as* LORD WINDERMERE *enters*)

Lord Windermere. (*Kisses her*) Margaret—how pale you look!

Lady Windermere. I slept very badly.

Lord Windermere. (*Sitting on sofa with her*) I am so sorry. I came in dreadfully late, and didn't like to wake you. You are crying, dear.

Lady Windermere. Yes, I am crying,

for I have something to tell you, Arthur.

Lord Windermere. My dear child, you are not well. You've been doing too much. Let us go away to the country. You'll be all right at Selby. The season is almost over. There is no use staying on. Poor darling! We'll go away to-day, if you like. (*Rises*) We can easily catch the 4:30. I'll send a wire to Fannen. (*Crosses and sits down at table to write a telegram*)

Lady Windermere. Yes, let us go away to-day. No, I can't go to-day, Arthur. There is someone I must see before I leave town—someone who has been kind to me.

Lord Windermere. (*Rising and leaning over sofa*) Kind to you?

Lady Windermere. Far more than that. (*Rises and goes to him*) I will tell you, Arthur, but only love me, love me as you used to love me.

Lord Windermere. Used to? You are not thinking of that wretched woman who came here last night? (*Coming round and sitting* R. *of her*) You don't still imagine —no, you couldn't.

Lady Windermere. I don't. I know now I was wrong and foolish.

Lord Windermere. It was very good of you to receive her last night—but you are never to see her again.

Lady Windermere. Why do you say that? (*A pause*)

Lord Windermere. (*Holding her hand*) Margaret, I thought Mrs. Erlynne was a woman more sinned against than sinning, as the phrase goes. I thought she wanted to be good, to get back into a place that she had lost by a moment's folly, to lead again a decent life. I believed what she told me—I was mistaken in her. She is bad—as bad as a woman can be.

Lady Windermere. Arthur, Arthur, don't talk so bitterly about any woman. I don't think now that people can be divided into the good and the bad, as though they were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad moods of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice. And I don't think Mrs. Erlynne a bad woman—I know she's not.

Lord Windermere. My dear child, the woman's impossible. No matter what harm she tries to do us, you must never see her again. She is inadmissible anywhere.

Lady Windermere. But I want to see her. I want her to come here.

Lord Windermere. Never!

Lady Windermere. She came here once as *your* guest. She must come now as *mine*. That is but fair.

Lord Windermere. She should never have come here.

Lady Windermere. (*Rising*) It is too late, Arthur, to say that now.

(*Moves away*)

Lord Windermere. (*Rising*) Margaret, if you knew where Mrs. Erlynne went last night after she left this house, you would not sit in the same room with her. It was absolutely shameless, the whole thing.

Lady Windermere. Arthur, I can't bear it any longer. I must tell you. Last night——

(*Enter* PARKER *with a tray on which lie* LADY WINDERMERE'S *fan and a card*)

Parker. Mrs. Erlynne has called to return your ladyship's fan which she took away by mistake last night. Mrs. Erlynne has written a message on the card.

Lady Windermere. Oh, ask Mrs. Erlynne to be kind enough to come up. (*Reads card*) Say I shall be very glad to see her. (*Exit* PARKER) She wants to see me, Arthur.

Lord Windermere. (*Takes card and looks at it*) Margaret, I *beg* you not to. Let me see her first, at any rate. She's a very dangerous woman. She is the most dangerous woman I know. You don't realize what you're doing.

Lady Windermere. It is right that I should see her.

Lord Windermere. My child, you may be on the brink of a great sorrow. Don't go to meet it. It is absolutely necessary that I should see her before you do.

Lady Windermere. Why should it be necessary?

(*Enter* PARKER)

Parker. Mrs. Erlynne.

(*Enter* MRS. ERLYNNE. *Exit* PARKER)

Mrs. Erlynne. How do you do, Lady Windermere? (*To* LORD WINDERMERE) How do you do? Do you know, Lady Windermere, I am so sorry about your fan. I can't imagine how I made such a silly mistake. Most stupid of me. And as I was driving in your direction, I thought I would take the opportunity of returning your property in person, with many apologies for my carelessness, and of bidding you good-by.

Lady Windermere. Good-by? (*Moves towards sofa with* MRS. ERLYNNE *and sits down beside her*) Are you going away, then, Mrs. Erlynne?

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes; I am going to live abroad again. The English climate doesn't suit me. My—heart is affected here, and that I don't like. I prefer living in the south. London is too full of fogs and—and serious people, Lord Windermere. Whether the fogs produce the serious people or whether the serious people produce the fogs, I don't know, but the whole thing rather gets on my nerves, and so I'm leaving this afternoon by the Club Train.

Lady Windermere. This afternoon? But I wanted so much to come and see you.

Mrs. Erlynne. How kind of you! But I am afraid I have to go.

Lady Windermere. Shall I never see you again, Mrs. Erlynne?

Mrs. Erlynne. I am afraid not. Our lives lie too far apart. But there is a little thing I would like you to do for me. I want a photograph of you, Lady Windermere—would you give me one? You don't know how gratified I should be.

Lady Windermere. Oh, with pleasure. There is one on that table. I'll show it to you. (*Goes across to the table*)

Lord Windermere. (*Coming up to* MRS. ERLYNNE *and speaking in a low voice*) It is monstrous your intruding yourself here after your conduct last night.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*With an amused smile*) My dear Windermere, manners before morals!

Lady Windermere. (*Returning*) I'm afraid it is very flattering—I am not so pretty as that. (*Showing photograph*)

Mrs. Erlynne. You are much prettier. But haven't you got one of yourself with your little boy?

Lady Windermere. I have. Would you prefer one of those?

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes.

Lady Windermere. I'll go and get it for you, if you'll excuse me for a moment. I have one upstairs.

Mrs. Erlynne. So sorry, Lady Windermere, to give you so much trouble.

Lady Windermere. (*Moves to door* R.) No trouble at all, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. Erlynne. Thanks so much. (*Exit* LADY WINDERMERE R.) You seem rather out of temper this morning, Windermere. Why should you be? Margaret and I get on charmingly together.

Lord Windermere. I can't bear to see

you with her. Besides, you have not told me the truth, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. Erlynne. I have not told *her* the truth, you mean.

Lord Windermere. (*Standing* C.) I sometimes wish you had. I should have been spared then the misery, the anxiety, the annoyance of the last six months. But rather than my wife should know—that the mother whom she was taught to consider as dead, the mother whom she has mourned as dead, is living—a divorced woman going about under an assumed name, a bad woman preying upon life, as I know you now to be—rather than that, I was ready to supply you with money to pay bill after bill, extravagance after extravagance, to risk what occurred yesterday, the first quarrel I have ever had with my wife. You don't understand what that means to me. How could you? But I tell you that the only bitter words that ever came from those sweet lips of hers were on your account, and I hate to see you next her. You sully the innocence that is in her. (*Moves* L. C.) And then I used to think that with all your faults you were frank and honest. You are not.

Mrs. Erlynne. Why do you say that?

Lord Windermere. You made me get you an invitation to my wife's ball.

Mrs. Erlynne. For my daughter's ball —yes.

Lord Windermere. You came, and within an hour of your leaving the house, you are found in a man's rooms—you are disgraced before everyone. (*Goes* UP *stage* C.)

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes.

Lord Windermere. (*Turning round on her*) Therefore I have a right to look upon you as what you are—a worthless, vicious woman. I have the right to tell you never to enter this house, never to attempt to come near my wife——

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Coldly*) My daughter, you mean.

Lord Windermere. You have no right to claim her as your daughter. You left her, abandoned her, when she was but a child in the cradle, abandoned her for your lover, who abandoned you in turn.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Rising*) Do you count that to his credit, Lord Windermere—or to mine?

Lord Windermere. To his, now that I know you.

Mrs. Erlynne. Take care—you had better be careful.

Lord Windermere. Oh, I am not going to mince words for you. I know you thoroughly.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Looking steadily at him*) I question that.

Lord Windermere. I *do* know you. For twenty years of your life you lived without your child, without a thought of your child. One day you read in the papers that she had married a rich man. You saw your hideous chance. You knew that to spare her the ignominy of learning that a woman like you was her mother, I would endure anything. You began your blackmailing.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Shrugging her shoulders*) Don't use ugly words, Windermere. They are vulgar. I saw my chance, it is true, and took it.

Lord Windermere. Yes, you took it—and spoiled it all last night by being found out.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*With a strange smile*) You are quite right, I spoiled it all last night.

Lord Windermere. And as for your blunder in taking my wife's fan from here, and then leaving it about in Darlington's rooms, it is unpardonable. I can't bear the sight of it now. I shall never let my wife use it again. The thing is soiled for me. You should have kept it, and not brought it back.

Mrs. Erlynne. I think I *shall* keep it. (*Goes* UP) It's extremely pretty. (*Takes up fan*) I shall ask Margaret to give it to me.

Lord Windermere. I hope my wife will give it you.

Mrs. Erlynne. Oh, I'm sure she will have no objection.

Lord Windermere. I wish that at the same time she would give you a miniature she kisses every night before she prays—it's the miniature of a young, innocent-looking girl with beautiful dark hair.

Mrs. Erlynne. Ah, yes, I remember. How long ago that seems! (*Goes to sofa and sits down*) It was done before I was married. Dark hair and an innocent expression were the fashion then, Windermere! (*A pause*)

Lord Windermere. What do you mean by coming here this morning? What is your object? (*Crossing* L. C. *and sitting*)

Mrs. Erlynne. (*With a note of irony in her voice*) To bid good-by to my dear daughter, of course. (LORD WINDERMERE *bites his underlip in anger.* MRS. ERLYNNE *looks at him, and her voice and manner become serious. In her accents as she talks there is a note of deep tragedy. For a moment she reveals herself*) Oh, don't imagine I am going to have a pathetic scene with her, weep on her neck and tell her who I am, and all that kind of thing. I have no ambition to play the part of a mother. Only once in my life have I known a mother's feelings. That was last night. They were terrible—they made me suffer—they made me suffer too much. For twenty years, as you say, I have lived childless—I want to live childless still. (*Hiding her feelings with a trivial laugh*) Besides, my dear Windermere, how on earth could I pose as a mother with a grown-up daughter? Margaret is twenty-one, and I have never admitted that I am more than twenty-nine, or thirty at the most. Twenty-nine when there are pink shades, thirty when there are not. So you see what difficulties it would involve. No, as far as I am concerned, let your wife cherish the memory of this dead, stainless mother. Why should I interfere with her illusions? I find it hard enough to keep my own. I lost one illusion last night. I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me, Windermere. Somehow it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old. (*Takes up hand-mirror from table and looks into it*) And it spoils one's career at critical moments.

Lord Windermere. You fill me with horror—with absolute horror.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Rising*) I suppose, Windermere, you would like me to retire into a convent or become a hospital nurse or something of that kind, as people do in silly modern novels. That is stupid of you, Arthur; in real life we don't do such things—not as long as we have any good looks left, at any rate. No—what consoles one now-a-days is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date. And besides, if a woman really repents, she has to go to a bad dressmaker, otherwise no one believes in her. And nothing in the world would induce me to do that. No; I am going to pass entirely out of your two lives. My coming into them has been a mistake—I discovered that last night.

Lord Windermere. A fatal mistake.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Smiling*) Almost fatal.

Lord Windermere. I am sorry now I did not tell my wife the whole thing at once.

Mrs. Erlynne. I regret my bad actions. You regret your good ones—that is the difference between us.

Lord Windermere. I don't trust you. I *will* tell my wife. It's better for her to know, and from me. It will cause her infinite pain—it will humiliate her ter-

ribly, but it's right that she should know.

Mrs. Erlynne. You propose to tell her?

Lord Windermere. I am going to tell her.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Going up to him*) If you do, I will make my name so infamous that it will mar every moment of her life. It will ruin her and make her wretched. If you dare to tell her, there is no depth of degradation I will not sink to, no pit of shame I will not enter. You shall not tell her—I forbid you.

Lord Windermere. Why?

Mrs. Erlynne. (*After a pause*) If I said to you that I cared for her, perhaps loved her even—you would sneer at me, wouldn't you?

Lord Windermere. I should feel it was not true. A mother's love means devotion, unselfishness, sacrifice. What could you know of such things?

Mrs. Erlynne. You are right. What could I know of such things? Don't let us talk any more about it; as for telling my daughter who I am, that I do not allow. It is my secret, it is not yours. If I make up my mind to tell her, and I think I will, I shall tell her before I leave this house—if not, I shall never tell her.

Lord Windermere. (*Angrily*) Then let me beg of you to leave our house at once. I will make your excuses to Margaret.

(*Enter* Lady Windermere r. *She goes over to* Mrs. Erlynne *with the photograph in her hand.* Lord Windermere *moves to back of sofa, and anxiously watches* Mrs. Erlynne *as the scene progresses*)

Lady Windermere. I am so sorry, Mrs. Erlynne, to have kept you waiting. I couldn't find the photograph anywhere. At last I discovered it in my husband's dressing-room—he had stolen it.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Takes photograph from her and looks at it*) I am not surprised—it is charming. (*Goes over to sofa with* Lady Windermere *and sits down beside her. Looks again at the photograph*) And so that is your little boy! What is he called?

Lady Windermere. Gerald, after my dear father.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Laying the photograph down*) Really?

Lady Windermere. Yes. If it had been a girl, I would have called it after my mother. My mother had the same name as myself, Margaret.

Mrs. Erlynne. My name is Margaret, too.

Lady Windermere. Indeed!

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes. (*Pause*) You are devoted to your mother's memory, Lady Windermere, your husband tells me.

Lady Windermere. We all have ideals in life. At least we all should have. Mine is my mother.

Mrs. Erlynne. Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

Lady Windermere. (*Shaking her head*) If I lost my ideals, I should lose everything.

Mrs. Erlynne. Everything?

Lady Windermere. Yes. (*Pause*)

Mrs. Erlynne. Did your father often speak to you of your mother?

Lady Windermere. No, it gave him too much pain. He told me how my mother had died a few months after I was born. His eyes filled with tears as he spoke. Then he begged me never to mention her name to him again. It made him suffer even to hear it. My father—my father really died of a broken heart. His was the most ruined life I know.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Rising*) I am afraid I must go now, Lady Windermere.

Lady Windermere. (*Rising*) Oh, no, don't.

Mrs. Erlynne. I think I had better. My carriage must have come back by

this time. I sent it to Lady Jedburgh's with a note.

Lady Windermere. Arthur, would you mind seeing if Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come back?

Mrs. Erlynne. Pray don't trouble Lord Windermere, Lady Windermere.

Lady Windermere. Yes, Arthur, do go, please. (LORD WINDERMERE *hesitates for a moment and looks at* MRS. ERLYNNE. *She remains quite impassive. He leaves the room*) (*To* MRS. ERLYNNE) Oh! What am I to say to you? You saved me last night! (*Goes torward her*)

Mrs. Erlynne. Hush—don't speak of it.

Lady Windermere. I must speak of it. I can't let you think I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband everything. It is my duty.

Mrs. Erlynne. It is not your duty—at least you have duties to others besides him. You say you owe me something?

Lady Windermere. I owe you everything.

Mrs. Erlynne. Then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way in which it can be paid. Don't spoil the one good thing I have done in my life by telling it to anyone. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us. You must not bring misery into your husband's life. Why spoil his love? You must not spoil it. Love is easily killed. Oh, how easily love is killed! Pledge me your word, Lady Windermere, that you will *never* tell him. I insist upon it.

Lady Windermere. (*With bowed head*) It is your will, not mine.

Mrs. Erlynne. Yes, it is my will. And never forget your child—I like to think of you as a mother. I like you to think of yourself as one.

Lady Windermere. (*Looking up*) I always will now. Only once in my life I have forgotten my own mother—that was last night. Oh, if I had remembered her, I should not have been so foolish, so wicked.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*With a slight shudder*) Hush, last night is quite over.

(*Enter* LORD WINDERMERE)

Lord Windermere. Your carriage has not come back yet, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. Erlynne. It makes no matter. I'll take a hansom. There is nothing in the world so respectable as a good Shrewsbury and Talbot. And now, dear Lady Windermere, I am afraid it is really good-by. (*Moves* UP C.) Oh, I remember. You'll think me absurd, but do you know, I've taken a great fancy to this fan that I was silly enough to run away with last night from your ball. Now I wonder would you give it to me? Lord Windermere says you may. I know it is his present.

Lady Windermere. Oh, certainly, if it will give you any pleasure. But it has my name on it. It has "Margaret" on it.

Mrs. Erlynne. But we have the same Christian name.

Lady Windermere. Oh, I forgot. Of course, do have it. What a wonderful chance our names being the same!

Mrs. Erlynne. Quite wonderful. Thanks—it will always remind me of you. (*Shakes hands with her*)

(*Enter* PARKER)

Parker. Lord Augustus Lorton. Mrs. Erlynne's carriage has come.

(*Enter* LORD AUGUSTUS)

Lord Augustus. Good-morning, dear boy. Good-morning, Lady Windermere. (*Sees* MRS. ERLYNNE) Mrs. Erlynne!

Mrs. Erlynne. How do you do, Lord Augustus? Are you quite well this morning?

Lord Augustus. (*Coldly*) Quite well, thank you, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. Erlynne. You don't look at all well, Lord Augustus. You stop up too late—it is so bad for you. You really should take care of yourself. Good-by, Lord Windermere. (*Goes towards door with a bow to* LORD AUGUSTUS. *Suddenly smiles, and looks back at him*) Lord Augustus! Won't you see me to my carriage? You might carry the fan.

Lord Windermere. Allow me!

Mrs. Erlynne. No, I want Lord Augustus. I have a special message for the dear Duchess. Won't you carry the fan, Lord Augustus?

Lord Augustus. If you really desire it, Mrs. Erlynne.

Mrs. Erlynne. (*Laughing*) Of course I do. You'll carry it so gracefully. You would carry off anything gracefully, dear Lord Augustus. (*When she reaches the door she looks back for a moment at* LADY WINDERMERE. *Their eyes meet. Then she turns, and exit* C., *followed by* LORD AUGUSTUS)

Lady Windermere. You will never speak against Mrs. Erlynne again, Arthur, will you?

Lord Windermere. (*Gravely*) She is better than one thought her.

Lady Windermere. She is better than I am.

Lord Windermere. (*Smiling as he strokes her hair*) Child, you and she belong to different worlds. Into your world evil has never entered.

Lady Windermere. Don't say that, Arthur. There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded oneself that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

Lord Windermere. (*Moves* DOWN *with her*) Darling, why do you say that?

Lady Windermere. (*Sits on sofa*) Because I, who had shut my eyes to life, came to the brink. And one who had separated us——

Lord Windermere. We were never parted.

Lady Windermere. We never must be again. Oh. Arthur, don't love me less, and I will trust you more. I will trust you absolutely. Let us go to Selby. In the Rose Garden at Selby, the roses are white and red.

(*Enter* LORD AUGUSTUS C.)

Lord Augustus. Arthur, she has explained everything! (LADY WINDERMERE *looks horribly frightened.* LORD WINDERMERE *starts.* LORD AUGUSTUS *takes* LORD WINDERMERE *by the arm, and brings him to front of stage*) My dear fellow, she has explained every demmed thing. We all wronged her immensely. It was entirely for my sake she went to Darlington's rooms—called first at the club. Fact is, wanted to put me out of suspense, and being told I had gone on, followed—naturally—frightened when she heard a lot of men coming in—retired to another room—I assure you, most gratifying to me, the whole thing. We all behaved brutally to her. She is just the woman for me. Suits me down to the ground. All the condition she makes is that we live out of England—a very good thing, too!—Demmed clubs, demmed climate, demmed cooks, demmed everything! Sick of it all.

Lady Windermere. (*Frightened*) Has Mrs. Erlynne——

Lord Augustus. (*Advancing towards her with a bow*) Yes, Lady Windermere, Mrs. Erlynne has done me the honor of accepting my hand.

Lord Windermere. Well, you are certainly marrying a very clever woman.

Lady Windermere. (*Taking her husband's hand*) Ah! you're marrying a very good woman.

CURTAIN

THE SHORT STORY: RUDYARD KIPLING

THE story that is short, as distinguished from the story of greater length, is not a new form of narrative, being as old as fiction itself. Under the guidance of Poe, however, and, during the latter part of the nineteenth century, of Stevenson and others, it took on certain characteristics of unity and brevity that brought it recognition as a distinct literary type, differentiated from other forms of fiction. The aim of the short story is to produce a single narrative effect,—a bit of human character revealed in a crisis, a dramatic situation interesting in itself, some great truth of human life flashing out picturesquely. Incidents tend to become a means to an end, and are important mainly as they contribute to the effect which the writer, obeying the laws of unity, has clearly in mind.

The complexity of modern life has unquestionably aided the popularity of the short story, for the demand it makes upon the reader is brief. Those who live at high tension appreciate fiction that goes right to the heart of the matter and portrays life tersely and suggestively. Not a few of the most significant writers of recent years have been drawn to this form of literature and some of them, like Mr. Kipling, have written numerous stories that can be grouped together because of having the same general background. With Mr. Kipling it is most frequently the life of the British in India.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, journalist, poet, and writer of prose fiction, has seen much of the world. Born in India, he was educated in England and showed during his school days a talent for writing. At the age of seventeen he became attached to a newspaper in Lahore and contributed both poems and stories. He then came to know well the conditions of Anglo-Indian life and the interests and habits of thought of the native population. The Britisher far from home in an enervating climate, the clash of race with race, the life of leisure among officers in army posts, and the British Tommy in barracks as well as in action, all interested him and have become known to the world through his pen.

During later years Mr. Kipling has traveled much, has given much of his attention to questions of importance in national life, and the backgrounds of his stories have shifted. The selections here given are from two of the earlier volumes, *Plain Tales from the Hills* and *Mine Own People*.

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–)

LISPETH

She was the daughter of Sonoo, a Hillman of the Himalayas, and Jadeh his wife. One year their maize failed, and two bears spent the night in their only opium poppy-field just above the Sutlej Valley on the Kotgarh side; so, next season, they turned Christian, and brought their baby to the Mission to be baptized. The Kotgarh Chaplain christened her Elizabeth, and "Lispeth" is the Hill or *pahari* pronunciation.

Later, cholera came into the Kotgarh Valley and carried off Sonoo and Jadeh, and Lispeth became half servant, half companion to the wife of the then Chaplain of Kotgarh. This was after the reign of the Moravian missionaries in that place, but before Kotgarh had quite forgotten her title of "Mistress of the Northern Hills."

Whether Christianity improved Lispeth, or whether the gods of her own people would have done as much for her under any circumstances, I do not know; but she grew very lovely. When a Hill-girl grows lovely she is worth traveling fifty miles over bad ground to look upon. Lispeth had a Greek face—one of those faces people paint so often, and see so seldom. She was of a pale, ivory color, and, for her race, extremely tall. Also, she possessed eyes that were wonderful; and, had she not been dressed in the abominable print-cloths affected by Missions, you would, meeting her on the hillside unexpectedly, have thought her the original Diana of the Romans going out to slay.

Lispeth took to Christianity readily, and did not abandon it when she reached womanhood, as do some Hill-girls. Her own people hated her because she had, they said, become a white woman and washed herself daily; and the Chaplain's wife did not know what to do with her. One cannot ask a stately goddess, five foot ten in her shoes, to clean plates and dishes. She played with the Chaplain's children and took classes in the Sunday-School, and read all the books in the house, and grew more and more beautiful, like the Princesses in fairy tales. The Chaplain's wife said that the girl ought to take service in Simla as a nurse or something "genteel." But Lispeth did not want to take service. She was very happy where she was.

When travelers—there were not many in those years—came in to Kotgarh, Lispeth used to lock herself into her own room for fear they might take her away to Simla, or out into the unknown world.

One day, a few months after she was seventeen years old, Lispeth went out for a walk. She did not walk in the manner of English ladies—a mile and a half out, with a carriage-ride back again. She covered between twenty and thirty miles in her little constitutionals, all about and about, between Kotgarh and Narkunda. This time she came back at full dusk, stepping down the breakneck descent into Kotgarh with something heavy in her arms. The Chaplain's wife was dozing in the drawing-room when Lispeth came in breathing heavily and very exhausted with her burden. Lispeth put it down on the sofa, and said simply, "This is my husband. I found him on the Bagi Road. He has hurt himself. We will nurse him, and when he is well, your husband shall marry him to me."

This was the first mention Lispeth had ever made of her matrimonial views, and the Chaplain's wife shrieked with horror. However, the man on the sofa needed attention first. He was a young Englishman, and his head had been cut to the bone by something jagged. Lispeth said she had found him down the hillside,

and had brought him in. He was breathing queerly and was unconscious.

He was put to bed and tended by the Chaplain, who knew something of medicine; and Lispeth waited outside the door in case she could be useful. She explained to the Chaplain that this was the man she meant to marry; and the Chaplain and his wife lectured her severely on the impropriety of her conduct. Lispeth listened quietly, and repeated her first proposition. It takes a great deal of Christianity to wipe out uncivilized Eastern instincts, such as falling in love at first sight. Lispeth, having found the man she worshipped, did not see why she should keep silent as to her choice. She had no intention of being sent away, either. She was going to nurse that Englishman until he was well enough to marry her. This was her program.

After a fortnight of slight fever and inflammation, the Englishman recovered coherence and thanked the Chaplain and his wife, and Lispeth—especially Lispeth—for their kindness. He was a traveler in the East, he said—they never talked about "globe-trotters" in those days, when the P. & O. fleet was young and small—and had come from Dehra Dun to hunt for plants and butterflies among the Simla hills. No one at Simla, therefore, knew anything about him. He fancied that he must have fallen over the cliff while reaching out for a fern on a rotten tree-trunk, and that his coolies must have stolen his baggage and fled. He thought he would go back to Simla when he was a little stronger. He desired no more mountaineering.

He made small haste to go away, and recovered his strength slowly. Lispeth objected to being advised either by the Chaplain or his wife; therefore the latter spoke to the Englishman, and told him how matters stood in Lispeth's heart. He laughed a good deal, and said it was very pretty and romantic, but, as he was engaged to a girl at Home, he fancied that nothing would happen. Certainly he would behave with discretion. He did that. Still he found it very pleasant to talk to Lispeth, and walk with Lispeth, and say nice things to her, and call her pet names while he was getting strong enough to go away. It meant nothing at all to him, and everything in the world to Lispeth. She was very happy while the fortnight lasted, because she had found a man to love.

Being a savage by birth, she took no trouble to hide her feelings, and the Englishman was amused. When he went away, Lispeth walked with him up the Hill as far as Narkunda, very troubled and very miserable. The Chaplain's wife, being a good Christian and disliking anything in the shape of fuss or scandal—Lispeth was beyond her management entirely—had told the Englishman to tell Lispeth that he was coming back to marry her. "She is but a child you know, and, I fear, at heart a heathen," said the Chaplain's wife. So all the twelve miles up the Hill the Englishman, with his arm round Lispeth's waist, was assuring the girl that he would come back and marry her; and Lispeth made him promise over and over again. She wept on the Narkunda Ridge till he had passed out of sight along the Muttiani path.

Then she dried her tears and went into Kotgarh again, and said to the Chaplain's wife, "He will come back and marry me. He has gone to his own people to tell them so." And the Chaplain's wife soothed Lispeth and said, "He will come back." At the end of two months, Lispeth grew impatient, and was told that the Englishman had gone over the seas to England. She knew where England was, because she had read little geography primers; but, of course, she had no conception of the nature of the sea, being a Hill-girl.

There was an old puzzle-map of the World in the house. Lispeth had played with it when she was a child. She unearthed it again, and put it together of evenings, and cried to herself, and tried to imagine where her Englishman was. As she had no ideas of distance or steamboats, her notions were somewhat wild. It would not have made the least difference had she been perfectly correct; for the Englishman had no intention of coming back to marry a Hill-girl. He forgot all about her by the time he was butterfly-hunting in Assam. He wrote a book on the East afterward. Lispeth's name did not appear there.

At the end of three months Lispeth made daily pilgrimage to Narkunda to see if her Englishman was coming along the road. It gave her comfort, and the Chaplain's wife finding her happier thought that she was getting over her "barbarous and most indelicate folly." A little later, the walks ceased to help Lispeth and her temper grew very bad. The Chaplain's wife thought this a profitable time to let her know the real state of affairs—that the Englishman had only promised his love to keep her quiet—that he had never meant anything, and that it was wrong and improper of Lispeth to think of marrying with an Englishman, who was of a superior clay, besides being promised in marriage to a girl of his own people. Lispeth said that all this was clearly impossible because he had said he loved her, and the Chaplain's wife had, with her own lips, asserted that the Englishman was coming back.

"How can what he said and you said be untrue?" asked Lispeth.

"We said it as an excuse to keep you quiet, child," said the Chaplain's wife.

"Then you have lied to me," said Lispeth, "you and he?"

The Chaplain's wife bowed her head, and said nothing. Lispeth was silent, too, for a little time; then she went out down the valley, and returned in the dress of a Hill-girl—infamously dirty, but without the nose-stud and earrings. She had her hair braided into the long pigtail, helped out with black thread, that Hill-women wear.

"I am going back to my own people," said she. "You have killed Lispeth. There is only left old Jadeh's daughter—the daughter of a *pahari* and the servant of *Tarka Devi*. You are all liars, you English."

By the time that the Chaplain's wife had recovered from the shock of the announcement that Lispeth had 'verted to her mother's gods, the girl had gone; and she never came back.

She took to her own unclean people savagely, as if to make up the arrears of the life she had stepped out of; and, in a little time, she married a woodcutter who beat her after the manner of *paharis*, and her beauty faded soon.

"There is no law whereby you can account for the vagaries of the heathen," said the Chaplain's wife, "and I believe that Lispeth was always at heart an infidel." Seeing she had been taken into the Church of England at the mature age of five weeks, this statement does not do credit to the Chaplain's wife.

Lispeth was a very old woman when she died. She had always a perfect command of English, and when she was sufficiently drunk, could sometimes be induced to tell the story of her first love-affair.

It was hard then to realize that the bleared, wrinkled creature, exactly like a wisp of charred rag, could ever have been "Lispeth of the Kotgarh Mission."

THROWN AWAY

To rear a boy under what parents call the "sheltered life system" is, if the boy

must go into the world and fend for himself, not wise. Unless he be one in a thousand he has certainly to pass through many unnecessary troubles; and may, possibly, come to extreme grief simply from ignorance of the proper proportions of things.

Let a puppy eat the soap in the bath-room or chew a newly-blacked boot. He chews and chuckles until, by and by, he finds out that blacking and Old Brown Windsor make him very sick; so he argues that soap and boots are not wholesome. Any old dog about the house will soon show him the unwisdom of biting big dogs' ears. Being young, he remembers and goes abroad, at six months, a well-mannered little beast with a chastened appetite. If he had been kept away from boots, and soap, and big dogs till he came to the trinity full-grown and with developed teeth, consider how fearfully sick and thrashed he would be! Apply that notion to the "sheltered life," and see how it works. It does not sound pretty, but it is the better of two evils.

There was a Boy once who had been brought up under the "sheltered life" theory; and the theory killed him dead. He stayed with his people all his days, from the hour he was born till the hour he went into Sandhurst nearly at the top of the list. He was beautifully taught in all that wins marks by a private tutor, and carried the extra weight of "never having given his parents an hour's anxiety in his life." What he learned at Sandhurst beyond the regular routine is of no great consequence. He looked about him, and he found soap and blacking, so to speak, very good. He ate a little, and came out of Sandhurst not so high as he went in. Then there was an interval and a scene with his people, who expected much from him. Next a year of living unspotted from the world in a third-rate depot battalion where all the juniors were children and all the seniors old women; and lastly he came out to India, where he was cut off from the support of his parents, and had no one to fall back on in time of trouble except himself.

Now India is a place beyond all others where one must not take things too seriously—the mid-day sun always excepted. Too much work and too much energy kill a man just as effectively as too much assorted vice or too much drink. Flirtation does not matter, because every one is being transferred and either you or she leave the Station, and never return. Good work does not matter, because a man is judged by his worst output and another man takes all the credit of his best as a rule. Bad work does not matter, because other men do worse and incompetents hang on longer in India than anywhere else. Amusements do not matter, because you must repeat them as soon as you have accomplished them once, and most amusements only mean trying to win another person's money. Sickness does not matter, because it's all in the day's work, and if you die, another man takes over your place and your office in the eight hours between death and burial. Nothing matters except Home-furlough and acting allowances, and these only because they are scarce. It is a slack country where all men work with imperfect instruments; and the wisest thing is to escape as soon as ever you can to some place where amusement is amusement and a reputation worth the having.

But this Boy—the tale is as old as the Hills—came out, and took all things seriously. He was pretty and was petted. He took the pettings seriously and fretted over women not worth saddling a pony to call upon. He found his new free life in India very good. It does look attractive in the beginning, from a subaltern's point of view—all ponies, partners, dancing, and so on. He tasted

it as the puppy tastes the soap. Only he came late to eating, with a grown set of teeth. He had no sense of balance —just like the puppy—and could not understand why he was not treated with the consideration he received under his father's roof. This hurt his feelings.

He quarreled with other boys, and, being sensitive to the marrow, remembered these quarrels, and they excited him. He found whist, and gymkhanas, and things of that kind (meant to amuse one after office) good; but he took them seriously too, just as seriously as he took the "head" that followed after drink. He lost his money over whist and gymkhanas because they were new to him.

He took his losses seriously, and wasted as much energy and interest over a two-goldmohur race for maiden ekka-ponies with their manes hogged, as if it had been the Derby. One half of this came from inexperience—much as the puppy squabbles with the corner of the hearth-rug—and the other half from the dizziness bred by stumbling out of his quiet life into the glare and excitement of a livelier one. No one told him about the soap and the blacking, because an average man takes it for granted that an average man is ordinarily careful in regard to them. It was pitiful to watch The Boy knocking himself to pieces, as an over-handled colt falls down and cuts himself when he gets away from the groom.

This unbridled license in amusements not worth the trouble of breaking line for, much less rioting over, endured for six months—all through one cold weather—and then we thought that the heat and the knowledge of having lost his money and health and lamed his horses would sober The Boy down, and he would stand steady. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred this would have happened. You can see the principle working in any Indian Station. But this particular case fell through because The Boy was sensitive and took things seriously—as I may have said some seven times before. Of course, we could not tell how his excesses struck him personally. They were nothing very heartbreaking or above the average. He might be crippled for life financially, and want a little nursing. Still the memory of his performances would wither away in one hot weather, and the bankers would help him to tide over the money-troubles. But he must have taken another view altogether and have believed himself ruined beyond redemption. His Colonel talked to him severely when the cold weather ended. That made him more wretched than ever; and it was only an ordinary "Colonel's wigging"!

What follows is a curious instance of the fashion in which we are all linked together and made responsible for one another. The thing that kicked the beam in The Boy's mind was a remark that a woman made when he was talking to her. There is no use in repeating it, for it was only a cruel little sentence, rapped out before thinking, that made him flush to the roots of his hair. He kept himself to himself for three days, and then put in for two days' leave to go shooting near a Canal Engineer's Rest House about thirty miles out. He got his leave, and that night at Mess was noisier and more offensive then ever. He said that he was "going to shoot big game," and left at half-past ten o'clock in an ekka. Partridge—which was the only thing a man could get near the Rest House—is not big game; so every one laughed.

Next morning one of the Majors came in from short leave, and heard that The Boy had gone out to shoot "big game." The Major had taken an interest in The Boy, and had, more than once, tried to check him. The Major put up his eyebrows when he heard of the expedition

and went to The Boy's rooms where he rummaged.

Presently he came out and found me leaving cards on the Mess. There was no one else in the ante-room.

He said, "The Boy has gone out shooting. Does a man shoot tetur with a revolver and writing-case?"

I said, "Nonsense, Major!" for I saw what was in his mind.

He said, "Nonsense or no nonsense, I'm going to the Canal now—at once. I don't feel easy."

Then he thought for a minute, and said, "Can you lie?"

"You know best," I answered. "It's my profession."

"Very well," said the Major, "you must come out with me now—at once—in an ekka to the Canal to shoot black-buck. Go and put on shikar—kit—quick—and drive here with a gun."

The Major was a masterful man; and I knew that he would not give orders for nothing. So I obeyed, and on return found the Major packed up in an ekka —gun-cases and food slung below—all ready for a shooting-trip.

He dismissed the driver and drove himself. We jogged along quietly while in the station; but, as soon as we got to the dusty road across the plains, he made that pony fly. A country-bred can do nearly anything at a pinch. We covered the thirty miles in under three hours, but the poor brute was nearly dead.

Once I said, "What's the blazing hurry, Major?"

He said, quietly, "The Boy has been alone, by himself for—one, two, five,—fourteen hours now! I tell you, I don't feel easy."

This uneasiness spread itself to me, and I helped to beat the pony.

When we came to the Canal Engineer's Rest House the Major called for The Boy's servant; but there was no answer. Then we went up to the house, calling for The Boy by name; but there was no answer.

"Oh, he's out shooting," said I.

Just then, I saw through one of the windows a little hurricane-lamp burning. This was at four in the afternoon. We both stopped dead in the verandah, holding our breath to catch every sound; and we heard, inside the room the "brr—brr—brr" of a multitude of flies. The Major said nothing, but he took off his helmet and we entered very softly.

The Boy was dead on the bed in the center of the bare, lime-washed room. He had shot his head nearly to pieces with his revolver. The gun-cases were still strapped, so was the bedding, and on the table lay The Boy's writing-case with photographs. He had gone away to die like a poisoned rat!

The Major said to himself, softly, "Poor Boy! Poor, poor devil!" Then he turned away from the bed and said, "I want your help in this business."

Knowing The Boy was dead by his own hand, I saw exactly what that help would be, so I passed over to the table, took a chair, lit a cheroot, and began to go through the writing-case; the Major looking over my shoulder and repeating to himself, "We came too late!—Like a rat in a hole!—Poor, poor devil!"

The Boy must have spent half the night in writing to his people, to his Colonel, and to a girl at Home; and as soon as he had finished, must have shot himself, for he had been dead a long time when we came in.

I read all that he had written, and passed over each sheet to the Major as I finished it.

We saw from his accounts how very seriously he had taken everything. He wrote about "disgrace which he was unable to bear"—"indelible shame"—"criminal folly"—"wasted life," and so

on; besides a lot of private things to his father and mother much too sacred to put into print. The letter to the girl at Home was the most pitiful of all; and I choked as I read it. The Major made no attempt to keep dry-eyed. I respected him for that. He read and rocked himself to and fro, and simply cried like a woman without caring to hide it. The letters were so dreary and hopeless and touching. We forgot about The Boy's follies, and only thought of the poor Thing on the bed and the scrawled sheets in our hands. It was utterly impossible to let the letters go Home. They would have broken his father's heart and killed his mother after killing her belief in her son.

At last the Major dried his eyes openly, and said, "Nice sort of thing to spring on an English family! What shall we do?".

I said, knowing what the Major had brought me out for, "The Boy died of cholera. We were with him at the time. We can't commit ourselves to half-measures. Come along."

Then began one of the most grimly comic scenes I have ever taken part in—the concoction of a big, written lie, bolstered with evidence, to soothe The Boy's people at Home. I began the rough draft of the letter, the Major throwing in hints here and there while he gathered up all the stuff that The Boy had written and burnt it in the fireplace. It was a hot, still evening when we began, and the lamp burned very badly. In due course I made the draft to my satisfaction, setting forth how The Boy was the pattern of all virtues, beloved by his regiment, with every promise of a great career before him, and so on; how we had helped him through the sickness—it was no time for little lies you will understand—and how he had died without pain. I choked while I was putting down these things and thinking of the poor people who would read them. Then I laughed at the grotesqueness of the affair, and the laughter mixed itself up with the choke—and the Major said that we both wanted drinks.

I am afraid to say how much whiskey we drank before the letter was finished. It had not the least effect on us. Then we took off The Boy's watch, locket, and rings.

Lastly, the Major said, "We must send a lock of hair, too. A woman values that."

But there were reasons why we could not find a lock fit to send. The Boy was black-haired, and so was the Major, luckily. I cut off a piece of the Major's hair above the temple with a knife, and put it into the packet we were making. The laughing-fit and the chokes got hold of me again, and I had to stop. The Major was nearly as bad; and we both knew that the worst part of the work was to come.

We sealed up the packet, photographs, locket, seals, ring, letter, and lock of hair with The Boy's sealing-wax and The Boy's seal.

Then the Major said, "For God's sake, let's get outside—away from the room—and think!"

We went outside, and walked on the banks of the Canal for an hour, eating and drinking what we had with us, until the moon rose. I know now exactly how a murderer feels. Finally, we forced ourselves back to the room with the lamp and the Other Thing in it, and began to take up the next piece of work. I am not going to write about this. It was too horrible. We burned the bedstead and dropped the ashes into the Canal; we took up the matting of the room and treated that in the same way. I went off to a village and borrowed two big hoes,—I did not want the villagers to help,—

while the Major arranged the other matters. It took us four hours' hard work to make the grave. As we worked, we argued out whether it was right to say as much as we remembered of the Burial of the Dead. We compromised things by saying the Lord's Prayer with a private unofficial prayer for the peace of the soul of The Boy. Then we filled in the grave and went into the verandah—not the house—to lie down to sleep. We were dead-tired.

When we woke the Major said, wearily, "We can't go back till to-morrow. We must give him a decent time to die in. He died early this morning, remember. That seems more natural." So the Major must have been lying awake all the time, thinking.

I said, "Then why didn't we bring the body back to cantonments?"

The Major thought for a minute. "Because the people bolted when they heard of the cholera. And the ekka has gone!"

That was strictly true. We had forgotten all about the ekka-pony, and he had gone home.

So we were left there alone, all that stifling day, in the Canal Rest House, testing and retesting our story of The Boy's death to see if it was weak in any point. A native appeared in the afternoon, but we said that a Sahib was dead of cholera, and he ran away. As the dusk gathered, the Major told me all his fears about The Boy, and awful stories of suicide or nearly-carried-out suicide—tales that made one's hair crisp. He said that he himself had once gone into the same Valley of the Shadow as The Boy, when he was young and new to the country; so he understood how things fought together in The Boy's poor jumbled head. He also said that youngsters, in their repentant moments, consider their sins much more serious and ineffaceable than they really are. We talked together all through the evening and rehearsed the story of the death of The Boy. As soon as the moon was up, and The Boy, theoretically, just buried, we struck across country for the Station. We walked from eight till six o'clock in the morning; but though we were dead-tired, we did not forget to go to The Boy's rooms and put away his revolver with the proper amount of cartridges in the pouch. Also to set his writing-case on the table. We found the Colonel and reported the death, feeling more like murderers than ever. Then we went to bed and slept the clock round; for there was no more in us.

The tale had credence as long as was necessary; for every one forgot about The Boy before a fortnight was over. Many people, however, found time to say that the Major had behaved scandalously in not bringing in the body for a regimental funeral. The saddest thing of all was the letter from The Boy's mother to the Major and me—with big inky blisters all over the sheet. She wrote the sweetest possible things about our great kindness, and the obligation she would be under to us as long as she lived.

All things considered, she was under an obligation; but not exactly as she meant.

FALSE DAWN

No man will ever know the exact truth of this story; though women may sometimes whisper it to one another after a dance, when they are putting up their hair for the night and comparing lists of victims. A man, of course, cannot assist at these functions. So the tale must be told from the outside—in the dark—all wrong.

Never praise a sister to a sister, in the hope of your compliments reaching the proper ears, and so preparing the way for you later on. Sisters are women first, and

sisters afterwards; and you will find that you do yourself harm.

Saumarez knew this when he made up his mind to propose to the elder Miss Copleigh. Saumarez was a strange man, with few merits so far as men could see, though he was popular with women, and carried enough conceit to stock a Viceroy's Council and leave a little over for the Commander-in-Chief's Staff. He was a Civilian. Very many women took an interest in Saumarez, perhaps because his manner to them was offensive. If you hit a pony over the nose at the outset of your acquaintance, he may not love you, but he will take a deep interest in your movements ever afterwards. The elder Miss Copleigh was nice, plump, winning, and pretty. The younger was not so pretty, and, from men disregarding the hint set forth above, her style was repellent and unattractive. Both girls had, practically, the same figure, and there was a strong likeness between them in look and voice; though no one could doubt for an instant which was the nicer of the two.

Saumarez made up his mind, as soon as they came into the station from Behar, to marry the elder one. At least, we all made sure that he would, which comes to the same thing. She was two-and-twenty, and he was thirty-three, with pay and allowances of nearly fourteen hundred rupees a month. So the match, as we arranged it, was in every way a good one. Saumarez was his name, and summary was his nature, as a man once said. Having drafted his Resolution, he formed a Select Committee of One to sit upon it, and resolved to take his time. In our unpleasant slang, the Copleigh girls "hunted in couples." That is to say, you could do nothing with one without the other. They were very loving sisters; but their mutual affection was sometimes inconvenient. Saumarez held the balance-hair true between them, and none but himself could have said to which side his heart inclined; though every one guessed. He rode with them a good deal and danced with them, but he never succeeded in detaching them from each other for any length of time.

Women said that the two girls kept together through deep mistrust, each fearing that the other would steal a march on her. But that has nothing to do with a man. Saumarez was silent for good or bad, and as business-likely attentive as he could be, having due regard to his work and his polo. Beyond doubt both girls were fond of him.

As the hot weather drew nearer and Saumarez made no sign, women said that you could see their trouble in the eyes of the girls—that they were looking strained, anxious, and irritable. Men are quite blind in these matters unless they have more of the woman than the man in their composition, in which case it does not matter what they say or think. I maintain it was the hot April days that took the color out of the Copleigh girls' cheeks. They should have been sent to the Hills early. No one—man or woman—feels an angel when the hot weather is approaching. The younger sister grew more cynical, not to say acid, in her ways, and the winningness of the elder wore thin. There was effort in it.

The Station wherein all these things happened was, though not a little one, off the line of rail, and suffered through want of attention. There were no gardens, or bands or amusements worth speaking of, and it was nearly a day's journey to come into Lahore for a dance. People were grateful for small things to interest them.

About the beginning of May, and just before the final exodus of Hill-goers, when the weather was very hot and there were not more than twenty people in the Station, Saumarez gave a moonlight riding-

picnic at an old tomb, six miles away, near the bed of the river. It was a "Noah's Ark" picnic; and there was to be the usual arrangement of quarter-mile intervals between each couple, on account of the dust. Six couples came altogether, including chaperones. Moonlight picnics are useful just at the very end of the season, before all the girls go away to the Hills. They lead to understandings, and should be encouraged by chaperones; especially those whose girls look sweetest in riding habits. I knew a case once. But that is another story. That picnic was called the "Great Pop Picnic," because every one knew Saumarez would propose then to the eldest Miss Copleigh; and, besides his affair, there was another which might possibly come to happiness. The social atmosphere was heavily charged and wanted clearing.

We met at the parade-ground at ten: the night was fearfully hot. The horses sweated even at walking-pace, but anything was better than sitting still in our own dark houses. When we moved off under the full moon we were four couples, one triplet, and Me. Saumarez rode with the Copleigh girls, and I loitered at the tail of the procession wondering with whom Saumarez would ride home. Every one was happy and contented; but we all felt that things were going to happen. We rode slowly; and it was nearly midnight before we reached the old tomb, facing the ruined tank, in the decayed gardens where we were going to eat and drink. I was late in coming up; and, before I went into the garden, I saw that the horizon to the north carried a faint, dun-colored feather. But no one would have thanked me for spoiling so well-managed an entertainment as this picnic —and a dust-storm, more or less, does no great harm.

We gathered by the tank. Some one had brought out a banjo—which is a most sentimental instrument—and three or four of us sang. You must not laugh at this. Our amusements in out-of-the-way Stations are very few indeed. Then we talked in groups or together, lying under the trees, with the sun-baked roses dropping their petals on our feet, until supper was ready. It was a beautiful supper, as cold and as iced as you could wish; and we stayed long over it.

I had felt that the air was growing hotter and hotter; but nobody seemed to notice it until the moon went out and a burning hot wind began lashing the orange-trees with a sound like the noise of the sea. Before we knew where we were, the dust-storm was on us and everything was roaring, whirling darkness. The supper-table was blown bodily into the tank. We were afraid of staying anywhere near the old tomb for fear it might be blown down. So we felt our way to the orange-trees where the horses were picketed and waited for the storm to blow over. Then the little light that was left vanished, and you could not see your hand before your face. The air was heavy with dust and sand from the bed of the river, that filled boots and pockets and drifted down necks and coated eyebrows and moustaches. It was one of the worst dust-storms of the year. We were all huddled together close to the trembling horses, with the thunder chattering overhead, and the lightning spurting like water from a sluice, all ways at once. There was no danger, of course, unless the horses broke loose. I was standing with my head downwind and my hands over my mouth, hearing the trees thrashing each other. I could not see who was next me till the flashes came. Then I found that I was packed near Saumarez and the eldest Miss Copleigh, with my own horse just in front of me. I recognized the eldest Miss Copleigh, because she had a puggree round her helmet, and

the younger had not. All the electricity in the air had gone into my body and I was quivering and tingling from head to foot—exactly as a corn shoots and tingles before rain. It was a grand storm. The wind seemed to be picking up the earth and pitching it to leeward in great heaps; and the heat beat up from the ground like the heat of the Day of Judgment.

The storm lulled slightly after the first half-hour, and I heard a despairing little voice close to my ear, saying to itself, quietly and softly, as if some lost soul were flying about with the wind, "O my God!" Then the younger Miss Copleigh stumbled into my arms, saying, "Where is my horse? Get my horse. I want to go home. I want to go home. Take me home."

I thought that the lightning and the black darkness had frightened her; so I said there was no danger, but she must wait till the storm blew over. She answered, "It is not that! I want to go home! Oh, take me away from here!"

I said that she could not go till the light came; but I felt her brush past me and go away. It was too dark to see where. Then the whole sky was split open with one tremendous flash, as if the end of the world were coming, and all the women shrieked.

Almost directly after this, I felt a man's hand on my shoulder and heard Saumarez bellowing in my ear. Through the rattling of the trees and howling of the wind, I did not catch his words at once, but at last I heard him say, "I've proposed to the wrong one! What shall I do?" Saumarez had no occasion to make this confidence to me. I was never a friend of his, nor am I now; but I fancy neither of us were ourselves just then. He was shaking as he stood with excitement, and I was feeling queer all over with the electricity. I could not think of anything to say except, "More fool you for proposing in a dust-storm." But I did not see how that would improve the mistake.

Then he shouted, "Where's Edith—Edith Copleigh?" Edith was the younger sister. I answered out of my astonishment, "What do you want with her?" For the next two minutes, he and I were shouting at each other like maniacs,—he vowing that it was the younger sister he had meant to propose to all along, and I telling him till my throat was hoarse that he must have made a mistake! I cannot account for this except, again, by the fact that we were neither of us ourselves. Everything seemed to me like a bad dream—from the stamping of the horses in the darkness to Saumarez telling me the story of his loving Edith Copleigh from the first. He was still clawing my shoulder and begging me to tell him where Edith Copleigh was, when another lull came and brought light with it, and we saw the dust-cloud forming on the plain in front of us. So we knew the worst was over. The moon was low down, and there was just the glimmer of the false dawn that comes about an hour before the real one. But the light was very faint, and the dun cloud roared like a bull. I wondered where Edith Copleigh had gone; and as I was wondering I saw three things together: First, Maud Copleigh's face come smiling out of the darkness and move towards Saumarez who was standing by me. I heard the girl whisper, "George," and slide her arm through the arm that was not clawing my shoulder, and I saw that look on her face which only comes once or twice in a lifetime—when a woman is perfectly happy and the air is full of trumpets and gorgeously-colored fire and the Earth turns into cloud because she loves and is loved. At the same time, I saw Saumarez's face as he heard Maud Copleigh's voice, and

fifty yards away from the clump of orange-trees, I saw a brown holland habit getting upon a horse.

It must have been my state of over-excitement that made me so ready to meddle with what did not concern me. Saumarez was moving off to the habit; but I pushed him back and said, "Stop here and explain. I'll fetch her back!" And I ran out to get at my own horse. I had a perfectly unnecessary notion that everything must be done decently and in order, and that Saumarez's first care was to wipe the happy look out of Maud Copleigh's face. All the time I was linking up the curb-chain I wondered how he would do it.

I cantered after Edith Copleigh, thinking to bring her back slowly on some pretence or another. But she galloped away as soon as she saw me, and I was forced to ride after her in earnest. She called back over her shoulder—"Go away! I'm going home. Oh, go away!" two or three times; but my business was to catch her first, and argue later. The ride fitted in with the rest of the evil dream. The ground was very rough, and now and again we rushed through the whirling, choking "dust-devils" in the skirts of the flying storm. There was a burning hot wind blowing that brought up a stench of stale brick-kilns with it; and through the half light and through the dust-devils, across that desolate plain, flickered the brown holland habit on the gray horse. She headed for the Station at first. Then she wheeled round and set off for the river through the beds of burned-down jungle-grass, bad even to ride pig over. In cold blood I should never have dreamed of going over such a country at night, but it seemed quite right and natural with the lightning crackling overhead, and a reek like the smell of the Pit in my nostrils. I rode and shouted, and she bent forward and lashed her horse, and the aftermath of the dust-storm came up, and caught us both, and drove us downwind like pieces of paper.

I don't know how far we rode; but the drumming of the horse-hoofs and the roar of the wind and the race of the faint blood-red moon through the yellow mist seemed to have gone on for years and years, and I was literally drenched with sweat from my helmet to my gaiters when the gray stumbled, recovered himself and pulled up dead lame. My brute was used up altogether. Edith Copleigh was bare-headed, plastered with dust, and crying bitterly. "Why can't you let me alone?" she said. "I only wanted to get away and go home. Oh, please let me go!"

"You have got to come back with me, Miss Copleigh. Saumarez has something to say to you."

It was a foolish way of putting it; but I hardly knew Miss Copleigh, and, though I was playing Providence at the cost of my horse, I could not tell her in as many words what Saumarez had told me. I thought he could do that better himself. All her pretence about being tired and wanting to go home broke down, and she rocked herself to and fro in the saddle as she sobbed, and the hot wind blew her black hair to leeward. I am not going to repeat what she said, because she was utterly unstrung.

This was the cynical Miss Copleigh, and I, almost an utter stranger to her, was trying to tell her that Saumarez loved her and she was to come back to hear him say so. I believe I made myself understood, for she gathered the gray together and made him hobble somehow, and we set off for the tomb, while the storm went thundering down to Umballa and a few big drops of warm rain fell. I found out that she had been standing close to Saumarez when he proposed to her sister, and had wanted to go home to cry in peace, as an English girl should.

She dabbed her eyes with her pocket-handkerchief as we went along, and babbled to me out of sheer lightness of heart and hysteria. That was perfectly unnatural; and yet, it seemed all right at the time and in the place. All the world was only the two Copleigh girls, Saumarez and I, ringed in with the lightning and the dark; and the guidance of this misguided world seemed to lie in my hands.

When we returned to the tomb in the deep dead stillness that followed the storm, the dawn was just breaking and nobody had gone away. They were waiting for our return. Saumarez most of all. His face was white and drawn. As Miss Copleigh and I limped up, he came forward to meet us, and, when he helped her down from her saddle, he kissed her before all the picnic. It was like a scene in a theater, and the likeness was heightened by all the dust-white, ghostly-looking men and women under the orange-trees clapping their hands—as if they were watching a play—at Saumarez's choice. I never knew anything so un-English in my life.

Lastly, Saumarez said we must all go home or the Station would come out to look for us, and would I be good enough to ride home with Maud Copleigh? Nothing would give me greater pleasure, I said.

So we formed up, six couples in all, and went back two by two; Saumarez walking at the side of Edith Copleigh, who was riding his horse. Maud Copleigh did not talk to me at any length.

The air was cleared; and, little by little, as the sun rose, I felt we were all dropping back again into ordinary men and women, and that the "Great Pop Picnic" was a thing altogether apart and out of the world—never to happen again. It had gone with the dust-storm and the tingle in the hot air.

I felt tired and limp, and a good deal ashamed of myself as I went in for a bath and some sleep.

There is a woman's version of this story, but it will never be written . . . unless Maud Copleigh cares to try.

THE INCARNATION OF KRISHNA MULVANEY

Once upon a time, and very far from this land, lived three men who loved each other so greatly that neither man nor woman could come between them. They were in no sense refined, nor to be admitted to the outer door-mats of decent folk, because they happened to be private soldiers in her majesty's army; and private soldiers of that employ have small time for self-culture. Their duty is to keep themselves and their accoutrements specklessly clean, to refrain from getting drunk more often than is necessary, to obey their superiors, and to pray for a war. All these things my friends accomplished, and of their own motion threw in some fighting work for which the Army Regulations did not call. Their fate sent them to serve in India, which is not a golden country, though poets have sung otherwise. There men die with great swiftness, and those who live suffer many and curious things. I do not think that my friends concerned themselves much with the social or political aspects of the East. They attended a not unimportant war on the northern frontier, another one on our western boundary, and a third in Upper Burma. Then their regiment sat still to recruit, and the boundless monotony of cantonment life was their portion. They were drilled morning and evening on the same dusty parade-ground. They wandered up and down the same stretch of dusty white road, attended the same church and the same grog-shop, and slept in the same lime-washed barn of a

barrack for two long years. There was Mulvaney, the father in the craft, who had served with various regiments from Bermuda to Halifax, old in war, scarred, reckless, resourceful, and in his pious hours an unequaled soldier. To him turned for help and comfort six and a half feet of slow-moving, heavy-footed Yorkshireman, born on the wolds, bred in the dales, and educated chiefly among the carriers' carts at the back of York railway station. His name was Learoyd, and his chief virtue an unmitigated patience which helped him to win fights. How Ortheris, a fox-terrier of a cockney, ever came to be one of the trio, is a mystery which even to-day I cannot explain. "There was always three av us," Mulvaney used to say. "An' by the grace av God, so long as our service lasts, three av us they'll always be. 'Tis betther so."

They desired no companionship beyond their own, and evil it was for any man of the regiment who attempted dispute with them. Physical argument was out of the question as regarded Mulvaney and the Yorkshireman; and assault on Ortheris meant a combined attack from these twain —a business which no five men were anxious to have on their hands. Therefore they flourished, sharing their drinks, their tobacco, and their money; good luck and evil; battle and the chances of death; life and the chances of happiness from Calicut in southern, to Peshawur in northern India. Through no merit of my own it was my good fortune to be in a measure admitted to their friendship—frankly by Mulvaney from the beginning, sullenly and with reluctance by Learoyd, and suspiciously by Ortheris, who held to it that no man not in the army could fraternize with a red-coat. "Like to like," said he. "I'm a bloomin' sodger—he's a bloomin' civilian. 'Taint natural—that's all."

But that was not all. They thawed progressively, and in the thawing told me more of their lives and adventures than I am likely to find room for here.

Omitting all else, this tale begins with the Lamentable Thirst that was at the beginning of First Causes. Never was such a thirst—Mulvaney told me so. They kicked against their compulsory virtue, but the attempt was only successful in the case of Ortheris. He, whose talents were many, went forth into the highways and stole a dog from a "civilian"—*videlicet*, some one, he knew not who, not in the army. Now that civilian was but newly connected by marriage with the colonel of the regiment, and outcry was made from quarters least anticipated by Ortheris, and in the end he was forced, lest a worse thing should happen, to dispose at ridiculously unremunerative rates of as promising a small terrier as ever graced one end of a leading-string. The purchase money was barely sufficient for one small outbreak which led him to the guard-room. He escaped, however, with nothing worse than a severe reprimand and a few hours of punishment drill. Not for nothing had he acquired the reputation of being "the best soldier of his inches" in the regiment. Mulvaney had taught personal cleanliness and efficiency as the first articles of his companions' creed. "A dhirty man," he was used to say, in the speech of his kind, "goes to clink for a weakness in the knees, an' is coort-martialed for a pair av socks missin'; but a clane man, such as is an ornament to his service—a man whose buttons are gold, whose coat is wax upon him, an' whose 'couterments are widout a speck—*that* man may, spakin' in reason, do fwhat he likes an' dhrink from day to divil. That's the pride av bein' dacint."

We sat together upon a day, in the shade of a ravine far from the barracks, where a water-course used to run in rainy weather. Behind us was the scrub jungle,

in which jackals, peacocks, the gray wolves of the North-western Provinces, and occasionally a tiger estrayed from Central India, were supposed to dwell. In front lay the cantonment, white under a glaring sun, and on either side ran the broad road that led to Delhi.

It was the scrub that suggested to my mind the wisdom of Mulvaney taking a day's leave and going upon a shooting-tour. The peacock is a holy bird throughout India, and whoso slays one is in danger of being mobbed by the nearest villagers; but on the last occasion that Mulvaney had gone forth he had contrived, without in the least offending local religious susceptibilities, to return with six beautiful peacock skins which he sold to profit. It seemed just possible then—

"But fwhat manner av use is ut to me goin' widout a dhrink? The ground's powdher-dhry under-foot, an' ut gets unto the throat fit to kill," wailed Mulvaney, looking at me reproachfully. "An' a peacock is not a bird you can catch the tail av onless ye run. Can a man run on wather—an' jungle-wather, too?"

Ortheris had considered the question in all its bearing. He spoke, chewing his pipe-stem meditatively the while:

"'Go forth, return in glory,
To Clusium's royal 'ome;
An' round these bloomin' temples 'ang
The bloomin' shields o' Rome.'

You better go. You ain't like to shoot yourself—not while there's a chanst of liquor. Me an' Learoyd 'll stay at 'ome an' keep shop—case o' anythin' turnin' up. But you go out with a gas-pipe gun an' ketch the little peacockses or somethin'. You kin get one day's leave easy as winkin'. Go along an' get it, an' get peacockses or somethin'."

"Jock?" said Mulvaney, turning to Learoyd, who was half asleep under the shadow of the bank. He roused slowly.

"Sitha, Mulvaney, go," said he.

And Mulvaney went; cursing his allies with Irish fluency and barrack-room point.

"Take note," said he, when he had won his holiday, and appeared dressed in his roughest clothes with the only other regimental fowling-piece in his hand—"take note, Jock, an' you, Orth'ris, I am goin' in the face av my own will—all for to please you. I misdoubt anythin' will come av pernicious huntin' afther peacockses in a desolit lan'; an' I know that I will lie down an' die wid thirrst. Me catch peacockes for you, ye lazy scutts—an' be sacrificed by the peasanthry—Ugh!"

He waved a huge paw and went away.

At twilight, long before the appointed hour, he returned empty-handed, much begrimed with dirt.

"Peacockses?" queried Ortheris, from the safe rest of a barrack-room table whereon he was smoking cross-legged, Learoyd fast asleep on a bench.

"Jock," said Mulvaney without answering, as he stirred up the sleeper. "Jock, can ye fight? Will ye fight?"

Very slowly the meaning of the words communicated itself to the half-roused man. He understood—and again—what might these things mean? Mulvaney was shaking him savagely. Meantime the men in the room howled with delight. There was war in the confederacy at last —war and the breaking of bonds.

Barrack-room etiquette is stringent. On the direct challenge must follow the direct reply. This is more binding than the ties of tried friendship. Once again Mulvaney repeated the question. Learoyd answered by the only means in his power, and so swiftly that the Irishman had barely time to avoid the blow. The laughter around increased. Learoyd looked bewildered at his friend—him-

self as greatly bewildered. Ortheris dropped from the table because his world was falling.

"Come outside," said Mulvaney, and as the occupants of the barrack-room prepared joyously to follow, he turned and said furiously: "There will be no fight this night—onless any wan av you is wishful to assist. The man that does, follow on."

No man moved. The three passed out into the moonlight, Learoyd fumbling with the buttons of his coat. The parade-ground was deserted except for the scurrying jackals. Mulvaney's impetuous rush carried his companions far into the open ere Learoyd attempted to turn round and continue the discussion.

"Be still now. 'Twas my fault for beginnin' things in the middle av an end, Jock. I should ha' comminst wid an explanation; but Jock, dear, on your sowl are ye fit, think you, for the finest fight that iver was—better than fightin' me? Considher before ye answer."

More than ever puzzled, Learoyd turned round two or three times, felt an arm, kicked tentatively, and answered: "Ah'm fit." He was accustomed to fight blindly at the bidding of the superior mind.

They sat them down, the men looking on from afar, and Mulvaney untangled himself in mighty words.

"Followin' your fools' scheme I wint out into the thrackless desert beyond the barricks. An' there I met a pious Hindu dhrivin' a bullock-kyart. I tuk ut for granted he wud be delighted for to convoy me a piece, an' I jumped in——"

"You long, lazy, black-haired swine," drawled Ortheris, who would have done the same thing under similar circumstances.

"'Twas the height av policy. That naygur-man dhruv miles an' miles—as far as the new railway line they're buildin' now back av the Tavi River, 'Tis a kyart for dhirt only,' says he now an' again, timorously, to get me out av ut. 'Dhirt I am,' sez I, 'an' the dhryest that you iver kyarted. Dhrive on, me son, an' glory be wid you.' At that I wint to slape, an' took no heed till he pulled up on the embankmint av the line where the coolies were pilin' mud. There was a matther av two thousand coolies on that line—you remimber that. Prisintly a bell rang, an' they throops off to a big pay-shed. 'Where's the white man in charge?' sez I to my kyart-dhriver. 'In the shed,' sez he, 'engaged on a riffle.' 'A fwhat?' sez I. 'Riffle,' sez he. "You take ticket. He takes money. You get nothin'.' 'Oho!' sez I, 'that's what the shuper'or an' cultivated man calls a raffle, me misbeguided child av darkness an' sin. Lead on to that raffle, though fwhat the mischief 'tis doin' so far away from uts home—which is the charity-bazaar at Christmas, an' the colonel's wife grinnin' behind the tea-table—is more than I know.' Wid that I wint to the shed an' found 'twas pay-day among the coolies. Their wages was on a table forninst a big, fine, red buck av a man—sivin fut high, four fut wide, an' three fut thick, wid a fist on him like a corn-sack. He was payin' the coolies fair an' easy, but he wud ask each man if he wud raffle that month, an' each man sez, 'Yes,' av course. Thin he would deduct from their wages accordin'. Whin all was paid, he filled an ould cigar-box full av gun-wads an' scatthered ut among the coolies. They did not take much joy av that performance, an' small wondher. A man close to me picks up a black gun-wad an' sings out, 'I have ut.' 'Good may ut do you,' sez I. The coolie wint forward to the big, fine, red man, who threw a cloth off of the most sumpshus, jooled, enameled, an' variously bediviled sedan-chair I iver saw."

"Sedan-chair! Put your 'ead in a bag.

That was a palanquin. Don't yer know a palanquin when you see it?" said Ortheris, with great scorn.

"I chuse to call ut sedan-chair, an' chair ut shall be, little man," continued the Irishman. " 'Twas a most amazin' chair—all lined wid pink silk an' fitted wid red silk curtains. 'Here ut is,' sez the red man. 'Here ut is,' sez the coolie, an' he grinned weakly-ways. 'Is ut any use to you?' sez the red man. 'No,' sez the coolie; 'I'd like to make a presint av ut to you.' 'I am graciously pleased to accept that same,' sez the red man, 'an' at that all the coolies cried aloud in fwhat was mint for cheerful notes, an' wint back to their diggin', lavin' me alone in the shed. The red man saw me, an' his face grew blue on his big, fat neck. 'Fwhat d'you want here?' sez he. 'Standin'-room an' no more,' sez I, 'onless it may be fwhat ye niver had, an' that's manners, ye raf-flin' ruffian,' for I was not goin' to have the service throd upon. 'Out of this,' sez he. 'I'm in charge av this section av con-struction.' 'I'm in charge av mesilf,' sez I, 'an' it's like I will stay awhile. D'ye raffle much in these parts?' 'Fwhat's that to you?' sez he. 'Nothin',' sez I, 'but a great dale to you, for begad I'm thinkin' you get the full half av your revenue from that sedan-chair. Is ut always raffled so?' I sez, an' wid that I wint to a coolie to ask questions. Bhoys, that man's name is Dearsley, an' he's been rafflin' that old sedan-chair monthly this matter av nine months. Ivry coolie on the section takes a ticket—or he gives 'em the go—wanst a month on pay-day. Ivry coolie that wins ut gives ut back to him, for 'tis too big to carry away, an' he'd sack the man that thried to sell ut. That Dearsley has been makin' the rowlin' wealth av Roshus by nefarious rafflin'. Think av the burnin' shame to the suf-ferin' coolie-man that the army in Injia are bound to protect an' nourish in their bosoms! Two thousand coolies defrauded wanst a month!"

"Dom t' coolies. Hast gotten t' cheer, man?" said Learoyd.

"Hould on. Havin' onearthed this amazin' an' stupenjus fraud committed by the man Dearsley, I hild a council av war, he thryin' all the time to sejuce me into a fight wid opprobrious language. That sedan-chair niver belonged by right to any foreman av coolies. 'Tis a king's chair or a quane's. There's gold on ut an' silk an' all manner av trapesemints. Bhoys, 'tis not for me to countenance any sort av wrong-doin'—me bein' the ould man—but—anyway he has had ut nine months, an' he dare not make throuble av ut was taken from him. Five miles away, or ut may be six——"

There was a long pause, and the jackals howled merrily. Learoyd bared one arm, and contemplated it in the moonlight. Then he nodded partly to himself and partly to his friends. Ortheris wriggled with suppressed emotion.

"I thought ye wud see the reasonable-ness av ut," said Mulvaney. "I made bould to say as much to the man before. He was for a direct front attack—fut, horse, an' guns—an' all for nothin', seein' that I had no thransport to convey the machine away. 'I will not argue wid you,' sez I, 'this day but subsequintly, Mister Dearsley, me rafflin' jool, we'll talk ut out lengthways.' 'Tis no good policy to swindle the naygur av his hard-earned emolumints, an' by presint informashin'—'twas the kyart-man that tould me—'ye've been perpethrating that same for nine months. But I'm a just man,' sez I, 'an' overlookin' the presumpshin that yondher settee wid the gilt top was not kem by honust'—at that he turned sky-green, so I knew things was more thrue than tell-able—'not kem by honest, I'm willin' to compound the felony for this month's winnin's.' "

"Ah! Ho!" from Learoyd and Ortheris.

"That man Dearsley's rushin' on his fate," continued Mulvaney, solemnly wagging his head. "All hell had no name bad enough for me that tide. Faith, he called me a robber! Me! that was savin' him from continuin' in his evil ways widout a remonstrince—an' to a man av conscience a remonstrince may change the chune av his life. ' 'Tis not for me to argue,' sez I, 'fwhatever ye are, Mister Dearsley, but by me hand I'll take away the timptation for you that lies in that sedan-chair.' 'You will have to fight me for ut,' sez he, 'for well I know you will never dare make report to any one.' 'Fight I will,' sez I, 'but not this day, for I'm rejuced for want av nourishment.' 'Ye're an ould, bould hand,' sez he, sizin' me up an' down; 'an a jool av a fight we will have. Eat now an' dhrink, an' go your way.' Wid that he gave me some hump an' whisky—good whisky—an' we talked av this an' that the while. 'It goes hard on me now,' sez I, wipin' my mouth, 'to confiscate that piece av furniture, but justice is justice.' 'Ye've not gut ut yet,' sez he; 'there's the fight between.' 'There is,' sez I, 'an' a good fight. Ye shall have the pick av the best quality in my rig'-ment for the dinner you have given this day.' Thin I came hot-foot for you two. Hould your tongue, the both. 'Tis this way. To-morrow we three will go there an' he shall have his pick betune me an' Jock. Jock's a deceivin' fighter, for he is all fat to the eye, an' he moves slow. Now I'm all beef to the look, an' I move quick. By my reckon', the Dearsley man won't take me; so me an' Orth'ris 'll see fair play. Jock, I tell you, 'twill be big fightin'—whipped, with the cream above the jam. Afther the business 'twill take a good three av us—Jock 'll be very hurt —to take away that sedan-chair."

"Palanquin." This from Ortheris.

"Fwhatever ut is, we must have ut. 'Tis the only sellin' piece av property widin reach that we can get so cheap. An' fwhat's a fight afther all? He has robbed the naygur-man dishonust. We rob him honest for the sake av the whisky he gave me."

"But wot'll we do with the bloomin' harticle when we've got it? Them palanquins are as big as 'ouses, an' uncommon 'ard to sell, as McCleary said when he stole the sentry-box from the Curragh."

"Who's goin' to do t' fightin'?" said Learoyd, and Ortheris subsided. The three returned to barracks without a word. Mulvaney's last argument clinched the matter. This palanquin was property, vendible and to be attained in the simplest and least embarrassing fashion. It would eventually become beer. Great was Mulvaney.

Next afternoon a procession of three formed itself and disappeared into the scrub in the direction of the new railway line. Learoyd alone was without care, for Mulvaney dived darkly into the future, and little Ortheris feared the unknown. What befell at that interview in the lonely pay-shed by the side of the half-built embankment only a few hundred coolies know, and their tale is a confusing one, running thus:

"We were at work. Three men in red coats came. They saw the sahib,—Dearsley Sahib. They made oration, and noticeably the small man among the red-coats. Dearsley Sahib also made oration, and used many very strong words. Upon this talk they departed together to an open space, and there the fat man in the red coat fought with Dearsley Sahib after the custom of white men—with his hands, making no noise, and never at all pulling Dearsley Sahib's hair. Such of us as were not afraid beheld these things for just so long a time as a man needs to cook the midday meal. The small man

in the red coat had possessed himself of Dearsley Sahib's watch. No, he did not steal that watch. He held it in his hand, and at certain seasons made outcry, and the twain ceased their combat, which was like the combat of young bulls in spring. Both men were soon all red, but Dearsley Sahib was much more red than the other. Seeing this, and fearing for his life—because we greatly loved him—some fifty of us made shift to rush upon the red-coats. But a certain man—very black as to the hair, and in no way to be confused with the small man, or the fat man who fought—that man, we affirm, ran upon us, and of us he embraced some ten or fifty in both arms, and beat our heads together, so that our livers turned to water, and we ran away. It is not good to interfere in the fightings of white men. After that Dearsley Sahib fell and did not rise, these men jumped upon his stomach and despoiled him of all his money, and attempted to fire the pay-shed, and departed. Is it true that Dearsley Sahib makes no complaint of these latter things having been done? We were senseless with fear, and do not at all remember. There was no palanquin near the pay-shed. What do we know about palanquins? Is it true that Dearsley Sahib does not return to his place, on account of sickness, for ten days? This is the fault of those bad men in the red coats, who should be severely punished; for Dearsley Sahib is both our father and mother, and we love him much. Yet, if Dearsley Sahib does not return to this place at all, we will speak the truth. There was a palanquin, for the up-keep of which we were forced to pay nine-tenths of our monthly wage. On such mulctings Dearsley Sahib allowed us to make obeisance to him before the palanquin. What could we do? We were poor men. He took a full half of our wages. Will the government repay us those moneys? Those three men in red coats bore the palanquin upon their shoulders and departed. All the money that Dearsley Sahib had taken from us was in the cushions of that palanquin. Therefore they stole it. Thousands of rupees were there—all our money. It was our bank-box, to fill which we cheerfully contributed to Dearsley Sahib three-sevenths of our monthly wage. Why does the white man look upon us with the eye of disfavor? Before God, there was a palanquin, and now there is no palanquin; and if they send the police here to make inquisition, we can only say that there never has been any palanquin. Why should a palanquin be near these works? We are poor men, and we know nothing."

Such is the simplest version of the simplest story connected with the descent upon Dearsley. From the lips of the coolies I received it. Dearsley himself was in no condition to say anything, and Mulvaney preserved a massive silence, broken only by the occasional licking of the lips. He had seen a fight so gorgeous that even his power of speech was taken from him. I respected that reserve until, three days after the affair, I discovered in a disused stable in my quarters a palanquin of unchastened splendor—evidently in past days the litter of a queen. The pole whereby it swung between the shoulders of the bearers was rich with the painted *papier-maché* of Cashmere. The shoulder-pads were of yellow silk. The panels of the litter itself were ablaze with the loves of all the gods and goddesses of the Hindoo Pantheon—lacquer on cedar. The cedar sliding-doors were fitted with hasps of translucent Jaipur enamel, and ran in grooves shod with silver. The cushions were of brocaded Delhi silk, and the curtains, which once hid any glimpse of the beauty of the king's palace, were stiff with gold. Closer investigation showed that the entire fabric was

everywhere rubbed and discolored by time and wear; but even thus it was sufficiently gorgeous to deserve housing on the threshold of a royal zenana. I found no fault with it, except that it was in my stable. Then, trying to lift it by the silver-shod shoulder-pole, I laughed. The road from Dearsley's pay-shed to the cantonment was a narrow and uneven one, and, traversed by three very inexperienced palanquin-bearers, one of whom was sorely battered about the head, must have been a path of torment. Still I did not quite recognizè the right of the three musketeers to turn me into a "fence for stolen property."

"I'm askin' you to warehouse ut," said Mulvaney when he was brought to consider the question. "There's no steal in ut. Dearsley tould us we cud have ut if we fought. Jock fought—an' oh, sorr, when the throuble was at uts finest an' Jock was bleedin' like a stuck pig, and little Orth'ris was shquealin' on one leg chewin' big bites out av Dearsley's watch, I wud ha' given my place at the fight to have had you see wan round. He tuk Jock, as I suspicioned he would, an' Jock was deceptive. Nine roun's they were even matched, an' at the tenth— About that palanquin now. There's not the least throuble in the world, or we wud not ha' brought ut here. You will ondherstand that the queen—God bless her!—does not reckon for a privit soldier to kape elephints an' palanquins an' sich in barricks. Afther we had dhragged ut down from Dearsley's through that cruel scrub that near broke Orth'ris's heart, we set ut in the ravine for a night; an' a thief av a porcupine an' a civit av a jackal roosted in ut, as well we knew in the mornin'. I put ut to you, sorr, is an elegant palanquin, fit for the princess, the natural abidin'-place av all the vermin in cantonmints? We brought ut to you, afther dhark, and put ut in your shtable. Do not let your conscience prick. Think av the rejoicin' men in the pay-shed yonder—lookin' at Dearsley wid his head tied up in a towel—an' well knowin' that they can dhraw their pay ivry month widout stoppages for riffles. Indirectly, sorr, you have rescued from an onprincipled son of a night-hawk the peasanthry av a numerous village. An', besides, will I let that sedan-chair rot on our hands? Not I. 'Tis not every day a piece av pure joolry comes into the market. There's not a king widin these forty miles"—he waved his hand around the dusty horizon —"not a king wud not be glad to buy ut. Some day mesilf, whin I have leisure, I'll take ut up along the road an' dishpose av ut."

"How?" said I, for I knew the man was capable of anything.

"Get into ut, av coorse, an' keep wan eye open through the curtains. Whin I see a likely man av the native persuasion, I will discind blushin' from me canopy an' say: 'Buy a palanquin, ye black scutt?' I will have to hire four men to carry me first, though; and that's impossible till next payday."

Curiously enough, Learoyd, who had fought for the prize, and in the winning secured the highest pleasure life had to offer him, was altogether disposed to undervalue it, while Ortheris openly said it would be better to break the thing up. Dearsley, he argued, might be a many-sided man, capable, despite his magnificent fighting qualities, of setting in motion the machinery of the civil law—a thing much abhorred by the soldier. Under the circumstances their fun had come and passed; the next pay-day was close at hand, when there would be beer for all. Wherefore longer conserve the painted palanquin?

"A first-class rifle-shot an' a good little man av your inches you are," said Mulvaney. "But you niver had a head worth

a soft-boiled egg. 'Tis me has to lie awake av nights schamin' an' plottin' for the three av us. Orth'ris, me son, 'tis no matther av a few gallons av beer—no, nor twenty gallons—but tubs an' vats an' firkins in that sedan-chair. Who ut was, an' what ut was, an' how ut got there, we do not know; but I know in me bones that you an' me an' Jock wid his sprained thumb will get a fortune thereby. Lave me alone, an' let me think."

Meantime, the palanquin stayed in my stall, the key of which was in Mulvaney's hand.

Pay-day came, and with it beer. It was not in experience to hope that Mulvaney, dried by four weeks' drought, would avoid excess. Next morning he and the palanquin had disappeared. He had taken the precaution of getting three days' leave "to see a friend on the railway," and the colonel, well knowing that the seasonal outburst was near, and hoping it would spend its force beyond the limits of his jurisdiction, cheerfully gave him all he demanded. At this point his history, as recorded in the mess-room, stopped.

Ortheris carried it not much further. "No, 'e wasn't drunk," said the little man, loyally, "the liquor was no more than feelin' its way round inside of 'im; but 'e went an' filled that 'ole bloomin' palanquin with bottles 'fore 'e went off. He's gone an' 'ired six men to carry 'im, an' I 'ad to 'elp 'im into 'is nupshal couch, 'cause 'e wouldn't 'ear reason. 'E's gone off in 'is shirt an' trousies, swearin' trenenjus—gone down the road in the palanquin, wavin' 'is legs out o' the windy."

"Yes," said I, "but where?"

"Now you arx me a question. 'E said 'e was going to sell that palanquin, but from observations what happened when I was stuffin' 'im through the door, I fancy 'e's gone to the new embankment to mock at Dearsley. Soon as Jock's off duty I'm goin' there to see if 'e's safe—not Mulvaney, but t'other man. My saints but I pity 'im as 'elps Terence out o' the palanquin when 'e's once fair drunk!"

"He'll come back without harm," I said.

"'Corse 'e will. On'y question is, what'll 'e be doin' on the road. Killin' Dearsley, like as not. 'E shouldn't 'a' gone without Jock or me."

Reinforced by Learoyd, Ortheris sought the foreman of the coolie gang. Dearsley's head was still embellished with towels. Mulvaney, drunk or sober, would have struck no man in that condition, and Dearsley indignantly denied that he would have taken advantage of the intoxicated brave.

"I had my pick o' you two," he explained to Learoyd, "and you got my palanquin—not before I'd made my profit on it. Why'd I do harm when everything's settled? Your man *did* come here—drunk as Davy's sow on a frosty night—came a-purpose to mock me—stuck his head out o' the door an' called me a crucified hodman. I made him drunker, an' sent him along. But I never touched him."

To these things Learoyd, slow to perceive the evidences of sincerity, answered only, "If owt comes to Mulvaney' long o' you, I'll gripple you, clouts or no clouts on your ugly head, an' I'll draw t' throat twisty-ways, man. See there now."

The embassy removed itself, and Dearsley, the battered, laughed alone over his supper that evening.

Three days passed—a fourth and a fifth. The week drew to a close and Mulvaney did not return. He, his royal palanquin, and his six attendants had vanished into air. A very large and very tipsy soldier, his feet sticking out of the litter of a reigning princess, is not a thing to travel along the ways without comment. Yet no man of all the country

round had seen any such wonder. He was, and he was not; and Learoyd suggested the immediate smashment of Dearsley as a sacrifice to his ghost. Ortheris insisted that all was well, and in the light of past experience his hopes seemed reasonable.

"When Mulvaney goes up the road," said he, " 'e's like to go a very long ways up, specially when 'e's so blue drunk as 'e is now. But what gits me is 'is not bein' 'eared of pullin' wool off the niggers somewheres about. That don't look good. The drink must ha' died out in 'im by this, unless 'e's broke a bank, and then—Why don't 'e come back? 'E didn't ought to ha' gone off without us."

Even Ortheris's heart sunk at the end of the seventh day, for half the regiment were out scouring the country-side, and Learoyd had been forced to fight two men who hinted openly that Mulvaney had deserted. To do him justice, the colonel laughed at the notion, even when it was put forward by his much-trusted adjutant.

"Mulvaney would as soon think of deserting as you would," said he. "No, he's either fallen into a mischief among the villagers—and yet that isn't likely, for he'd blarney himself out of the Pit; or else he is engaged on urgent private affairs—some stupendous devilment that we shall hear of at mess after it has been the round of the barrack-rooms. The worst of it is that I shall have to give him twenty-eight days' confinement at least for being absent without leave, just when I most want him to lick the new batch of recruits into shape. I never knew a man who could put polish on young soldiers as quickly as Mulvaney can. How does he do it?"

"With blarney and the buckle-end of a belt, sir," said the adjutant. "He is worth a couple of non-commissioned officers when we are dealin' with an Irish draft, and the London lads seem to adore him. The worst of it is that if he goes to the cells the other two are neither to hold nor to bind till he comes out again. I believe Ortheris preaches mutiny on those occasions, and I know that the mere presence of Learoyd mourning for Mulvaney kills all the cheerfulness of his room. The sergeant tells me that he allows no man to laugh when he feels unhappy. They are a queer gang."

"For all that, I wish we had a few more of them. I like a well-conducted regiment, but these pasty-faced, shifty-eyed, mealy-mouthed young slouchers from the depot worry me sometimes with their offensive virtue. They don't seem to have backbone enough to do anything but play cards and prowl round the married quarters. I believe I'd forgive that old villain on the spot if he turned up with any sort of explanation that I could in decency accept."

"Not likely to be much difficulty about that, sir," said the adjutant. "Mulvaney's explanations are only one degree less wonderful than his performances. They say that when he was in the Black Tyrone, before he came to us, he was discovered on the banks of the Liffy trying to sell his colonel's charger to a Donegal dealer as a perfect lady's hack. Shackbolt commanded the Tyrone then."

"Shackbolt must have had apoplexy at the thought of his ramping war-horse answering to that description. He used to buy unbacked devils, and tame them by some pet theory of starvation. What did Mulvaney say?"

"That he was a member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, anxious to 'sell the poor baste where he would get something to fill out his dimples.' Shackbolt laughed, but I fancy that was why Mulvaney exchanged to ours."

"I wish he were back," said the col-

onel; "for I like him and believe he likes me."

That evening, to cheer our souls, Learoyd, Ortheris and I went into the waste to smoke out a porcupine. All the dogs attended, but even their clamor—and they began to discuss the shortcomings of porcupines before they left the cantonments—could not take us out of ourselves. A large, low moon turned the tops of the plume-grass to silver, and the stunted camel thorn-bushes and sour tamarisks into the likeness of trooping devils. The smell of the sun had not left the earth, and little aimless winds blowing across the rose-gardens to the southward brought the scent of dried roses and water. Our fire once started, and the dogs craftily disposed to wait the dash of the porcupine, we climbed to the top of a rain-scarred hillock of earth, and looked across the scrub seamed with cattle-paths, white with the long grass, and dotted with spots of level pond-bottom, where the snipe would gather in winter.

"This," said Ortheris, with a sigh, as he took in the unkempt desolation of it all, "this is sanguinary. This is unusual sanguinary. Sort o' mad country. Like a grate when the fire's put out by the sun." He shaded his eyes against the moonlight. "An' there's a loony dancin' in the middle of it all. Quite right. I'd dance too if I wasn't so downheart."

There pranced a portent in the face of the moon—a huge and ragged spirit of the waste, that flapped its wings from afar. It had risen out of the earth; it was coming toward us, and its outline was never twice the same. The toga, table-cloth, or dressing-gown, whatever the creature wore, took a hundred shapes. Once it stopped on a neighboring mound and flung all its legs and arms to the winds.

"My, but that scarecrow 'as got 'em bad!" said Ortheris. "Seems like if 'e comes any furder we'll 'ave to argify with 'im."

Learoyd raised himself from the dirt as a bull clears his flanks from the wallow. And as the bull bellows, so he, after a short minute at gaze, gave tongue to the stars.

"MULVANEY! MULVANEY! A hoo!"

Then we yelled all together, and the figure dipped into the hollow, till, with a crash of rending grass, the lost one strode up to the light of the fire and disappeared to the waist in a wave of joyous dogs. Then Learoyd and Ortheris gave greeting, bass and falsetto together, both swallowing a lump in the throat.

"You damned fool!" said they, and severally pounded him with their fists.

"Go easy!" he answered, wrapping a huge arm round each. "I would have you to know that I am a god, to be treated as such—tho', by me faith, I fancy I've got to go to the guard-room just like a privit soldier."

The latter part of the sentence destroyed the suspicions raised by the former. Any one would have been justified in regarding Mulvaney as mad. He was hatless and shoeless, and his shirt and trousers were dropping off him. But he wore one wondrous garment—a gigantic cloak that fell from collar-bone to heels—of pale pink silk, wrought all over, in cunningest needlework of hands long since dead, with the loves of the Hindu gods. The monstrous figures leaped in and out of the light of the fire as he settled the folds round him.

Ortheris handled the stuff respectfully for a moment while I was trying to remember where I had seen it before. Then he screamed: "What *'ave* you done with the palanquin? You're wearin' the linin'."

"I am," said the Irishman, "an' by the same token the 'broidery is scrapin' me

hide off. I've lived in this sumpshus counterpane for four days. Me son, I begin to ondherstand why the naygur is no use. Widout me boots, an' me trousies like an open-work stocking on a gyurl's leg at a dance, I began to feel like a naygur-man—all fearful and timoreous. Give me a pipe an' I'll tell on."

He lighted a pipe, resumed his grip of his two friends, and rocked to and fro in a gale of laughter.

"Mulvaney," said Ortheris, sternly, " 'tain't no time for laughin'. You've given Jock an' me more trouble than you're worth. You 'ave been absent without leave, an' you'll go into cells for that; an' you 've come back disgustin'ly dressed an' most improper in the linin' o' that bloomin' palanquin. Instid of which you laugh. An' *we* thought you was dead all the time."

"Bhoys," said the culprit, still shaking gently, "whin I've done me tale you may cry if you like, an' little Orth'ris here can thrample me inside out. Ha' done an' listen. Me performinces have been stupenjus; me luck has been the blessed luck av the British army—an' there's no better than that. I went out dhrunk an' drinking in the palanquin, an' I have come back a pink god. Did any av you go to Dearsley afther me time was up? He was at the bottom of ut all."

"Ah said so," murmured Learoyd. "To-morrow ah'll smash t' face in upon his heead."

"Ye will not. Dearsley's a jool av a man. Afther Ortheris had put me into the palanquin an' the six bearer-men were gruntin' down the road, I tuk thought to mock Dearsley for that fight. So I tould thim: 'Go to th' embankmint,' and there, bein' most amazin' full, I shtuck my head out av the concern, an' passed compliments wid Dearsley. I must ha' miscalled him outrageous, for whin I am that way the power av the tongue comes on me. I can bare remimber tellin' him that his mouth opened endways like the mouth av a skate, which was thrue afther Learoyd had handled ut; an' I clear remimber his takin' no manner nor matter av offense, but givin' me a big dhrink av beer. 'Twas the beer that did the thrick, for I crawled back into the palanquin, steppin' on me right ear wid me left foot, an' thin I slept like the dead. Wanst I half roused, an' begad the noise in me head was tremenjus—roarin' an' rattlin' an' poundin', such as was quite new to me. 'Mother av Mercy,' thinks I, 'fwhat a concertina I will have on me shoulders whin I wake!' An' wid that I curls mesilf up to sleep before ut should get hould on me. Bhoys, that noise was not dhrink, 'twas the rattle av a thrain!"

There followed an impressive pause.

"Yes, he had put me on a thrain—put me, palanquin an' all, an' six black assassins av his own coolies that was in his nefarious confidence, on the flat av a ballast-thruck, and we were rowlin' on, bowlin' along to Benares. Glory be that I did not wake up then an' introjuce mesilf to the coolies. As I was sayin', I slept for the betther part av a day an' a night. But remimber you, that that man Dearsley had packed me off on wan av his material-thrains to Benares, all for to make me over-stay me leave an' get me into the cells."

The explanation was an eminently rational one. Benares was at least ten hours by rail from the cantonments, and nothing in the world could have saved Mulvaney from arrest as a deserter had he appeared there in the apparel of his orgies. Dearsley had not forgotten to take revenge. Learoyd, drawing back a little, began to place soft blows over selected portions of Mulvaney's body. His thoughts were away on the embankment,

and they meditated evil for Dearsley. Mulvaney continued:

"Whin I was full awake the palanquin was set down in a street, I suspicioned, for I cud hear people passin' an' talkin'. But I knew well I was far from home. There is a queer smell upon our cantonments—smell av dried earth an' brick-kilns wid whiffs av a cavalry stable-litter. This place smelt marigold flowers an' bad water, an' wanst somethin' alive came an' blew heavy with his muzzle at the chink av the shutter. 'It's in a village I am,' thinks I to mesilf, 'an' the parochial buffalo is investigatin' the palanquin.' But anyways I had no desire to move. Only lie still whin you're in foreign parts an' the standin' luck av the British army will carry ye through. That is an epigram. I made ut.

"Thin a lot av whisperin' divils surrounded the palanquin. 'Take ut up,' says wan man. 'But who'll pay us?' says another. 'The Maharanee's minister, av coorse,' sez the man. 'Oho!' sez I to mesilf; 'I'm a quane in me own right, wid a minister to pay me expinses. I'll be an emperor if I lie still long enough. But this is no village I've struck.' I lay quiet, but I gummed me right eye to a crack av the shutters, an' I saw that the whole street was crammed wid palanquins an' horses an' a sprinklin' av naked priests, all yellow powder an' tigers' tails. But I may tell you, Orth'ris, an' you, Learoyd, that av all the palanquins ours was the most imperial an' magnificent. Now, a palanquin means a native lady all the world over, excipt whin a soldier av the quane happens to be takin' a ride. 'Women an' priests!' sez I. 'Your father's son is in the right pew this time, Terence. There will be proceedin's.' Six black divils in pink muslin tuk up the palanquin, an' oh! but the rowlin' an' the rockin' made me sick. Thin we got fair jammed among the palanquins—not more than fifty av them—an' we grated an' bumped like Queenstown potato-smacks in a runnin' tide. I cud hear the women gigglin' and squirkin' in their palanquins, but mine was the royal equipage. They made way for ut, an', begad, the pink muslin men o' mine were howlin', 'Room for the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun.' Do you know aught av the lady, sorr?"

"Yes," said I. "She is a very estimable old queen of the Central India States, and they say she is fat. How on earth could she go to Benares without all the city knowing her palanquin?"

" 'Twas the eternal foolishness av the naygur-men. They saw the palanquin lyin' loneful an' forlornsome, an' the beauty av ut, after Dearsley's men had dhropped ut an' gone away, an' they gave ut the best name that occurred to thim. Quite right, too. For aught we know, the old lady was thravelin' *incog.*—like me. I'm glad to hear she's fat. I was no light weight mesilf, an' me men were mortial anxious to dhrop me under a great big archway promiscuously ornamented wid the most improper carvin's an' cuttin's I iver saw. Begad! they made me blush—like a—like maharanee."

"The temple of Prithi-Devi," I murmured, remembering the monstrous horrors of that sculptured archway at Benares.

"Pretty Devilskins, savin' your presence, sorr. There was nothin' pretty about ut, except me! 'Twas all half dhark, an' whin the coolies left they shut a big black gate behind av us, an' half a company av fat yellow priests began pully-haulin' the palanquins into a dharker place yet—a big stone hall full av pillars an' gods an' incense an' all manner av similar thruck. The gate disconcerted me, for I perceived I wud have to go forward to get out, my retreat bein' cut off. By the same token a good priest makes a bad palanquin-coolie. Begad!

they nearly turned me inside out draggin' the palanquin to the temple. Now the disposishin av the forces inside was this way. The Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun—that was me—lay by the favor of Providence on the far left flank behind the dhark av a pillar carved with elephant's heads. The remainder av the palanquins was in a big half circle facing into the biggest, fattest, and most amazin' she-god that iver I dreamed av. Her head ran up into the black above us, an' her feet stuck out in the light av a little fire av melted butter that a priest was feedin' out av a butter-dish. Thin a man began to sing an' play on somethin' back in the dhark, an' 'twas a queer song. Ut made me hair lift on the back av me neck. Thin the doors av all the palanquins slid back, an' the women bundled out. I saw what I'll niver see agin. 'Twas more glorious than transformations at a pantomime, for they was in pink, an' blue, an' silver, an' red, an' grass-green, wid diamonds, an' imralds, an' great red rubies all over thim. But that was the least part av the glory. Oh, bhoys, they were more lovely than the like av any loveliness in Hivin; ay, their little bare feet were better than the white hands av a lord's lady, an' their mouths were like puckered roses, an' their eyes were bigger an' dharker than the eyes av any livin' women I've seen. Ye may laugh, but I'm speakin' truth. I never saw the like, an' I never will again."

"Seeing that in all probability you were watching the wives and daughters of most of the kings of India, the chances are that you won't," I said, for it was dawning on me that Mulvaney had stumbled upon a big queen's praying at Benares.

"I niver will," he said, mournfully. "That sight doesn't come twist to any man. It made me ashamed to watch. A fat priest knocked at me door. I didn't think he'd have the insolince to disturb the Maharanee av Gokral-Seetarun, so I lay still. 'The old cow's asleep,' sez he to another. 'Let her be,' sez that. ' 'Twill be long before she has a calf!' I might ha' known before he spoke that all a woman prays for in Injia—an' for the matter o' that in England too—is childher. That made me more sorry I'd come, me bein', as you well know, a childless man."

He was silent for a moment, thinking of his little son, dead many years ago.

"They prayed, an' the butter-fires blazed up an' the incense turned everything blue, an' between that an' the fires the women looked as tho' they were all ablaze an' twinklin'. They took hold av the she-god's knees, they cried out an' they threw thimsilves about, an' that world-without-end-amen music was dhrivin' thim mad. Mother av Hivin! how they cried, an' the old she-god grinnin' above them all so scornful! The dhrink was dyin' out in me fast, an' I was thinkin' harder than the thoughts wud go through me head—thinkin' how to get out, an' all manner of nonsinse as well. The women were rockin' in rows, their di'mond belts clickin', an' the tears runnin' out betune their hands, an' the lights were goin' lower and dharker. Thin there was a blaze like lightnin' from the roof, an' that showed me the inside av the palanquin, an' at the end where my foot was stood the livin' spit an' image o' myself worked on the linin'. This man here, it was."

He hunted in the folds of his pink cloak, ran a hand under one, and thrust into the firelight a foot-long embroidered presentment of the great god Krishna, playing on a flute. The heavy jowl, the staring eye, and the blue-black mustache of the god made up a far-off resemblance to Mulvaney.

"The blaze was gone in a wink, but the whole schame came to me thin. I be-

lieve I was mad, too. I slid the off-shutter open an' rowled out into the dhark behind the elephint-head pillar, tucked up me trousies to me knees, slipped off me boots and tuk a general hould av all the pink linin' av the palanquin. Glory be, ut ripped out like a woman's dhriss when you thread on ut at a sarjint's ball, and a bottle came with ut. I tuk the bottle, an' the next minut I was out av the dhark av the pillar, the pink linin' wrapped round me most graceful, the music thunderin' like kettle-drums, an' a cowld draft blowin' round me bare legs. By this hand that did ut, I was Krishna tootlin' on the flute—the god that the reg'mintal chaplain talks about. A sweet sight I must ha' looked. I knew me eyes were big, an' me face was wax white, an' at the worst I must ha' looked like a ghost. But they took me for the livin' god. The music stopped, an' the women were dead dumb, an' I crooked me legs like a shepherd on a china basin, an' I did the ghost-waggle with me feet as I had done at the rig'mintal theater many times, an' I slid acrost the width av that temple in front av the she-god, tootlin' on the beer-bottle."

"Wot did you toot?" demanded Ortheris the practical.

"Me? Oh!" Mulvaney sprung up, suiting the action to the word, and slidin' gravely in front of us, a dilapidated but imposing deity in the half light. "I sung:

> "'Only say
> You'll be Mrs. Brallaghan,
> Don't say nay,
> Charmin' Juley Callaghan.'

I didn't know me own voice when I sung. An' oh! 'twas pitiful to see the women. The darlin's were down on their faces. Whin I passed the last wan I cud see her poor little fingers workin' one in another as if she wanted to touch me feet. So I dhrew the tail av this pink overcoat over her head for the greater honor, an' I slid into the dhark on the other side av the temple, an' fetched up in the arms av a big fat priest. All I wanted was to get away clear. So I tuk him by his greasy throat an' shut the speech out av him. 'Out!' sez I. 'Which way, ye fat heathen?' 'Oh!' sez he. 'Man,' sez I. 'White man, soldier man, common soldier man. Where in the name of confusion is the back door?' The women in the temple were still on their faces an' a young priest was holdin' out his arms above their heads.

'This way,' sez me fat friend, duckin' behind a big bull-dog an' divin' into a passage. Thin I remimbered that I must ha' made the miraculous reputation av that temple for the next fifty years. 'Not so fast,' I sez, an' I held out both me hands wid a wink. That ould thief smiled like a father. I tuk him by the back av the neck in case he should be wishful to put a knife into me unbeknownst, an' I ran him up an' down the passage twice to collect his sensibilities! 'Be quiet!' sez he, in English. 'Now you talk sense,' I sez. 'Fwhat'll you give me for the use av that most iligant palanquin I have no time to take away?' 'Don't tell,' sez he. 'Is ut like?' sez I. 'But ye might give me me railway fare. I'm far away from me home, an' I've done you a service.' Bhoys, 'tis a good thing to be a priest. The ould man niver throubled himself to dhraw from a bank. As I will prove to you subsequint, he philandered all round the slack av his clothes an' began dribblin' ten-rupee notes, old gold mohurs, an' rupees into me hand till I could hould no more."

"You lie!" said Ortheris. "You're mad or sunstrook. A native don't give coin unless you cut it out o' 'im. 'Tain't nature."

"Thin me lie and me sunshtroke is

concealed under that lump av sod yonder," retorted Mulvaney unruffled, nodding across the scrub. "An' there's a dale more in nature than your squidgy little legs have iver taken you to, Orth'ris, me son. Four hundred and thirty-four rupees by me reckonin', *an'* a big fat gold necklace that I took from him as a remimbrancer, was our share in that business."

"An' 'e give it to you for love?" said Ortheris.

"We were alone in that passage. Maybe I was a trifle too pressin', but considher fwhat I had done for the good av the temple an' the iverlastin' joy av those women. 'Twas cheap at the price. I wud ha' taken more if I could ha' found it. I turned the ould man upside down at the last, but he was milked dhry. Thin he opened a door in another passage, an' I found mesilf up to me knees in Benares river-water, an' bad smellin' ut is. More by token I had come out on the river line close to a cracklin' corpse. This was in the heart av the night, for I had been four hours in the temple. There was a crowd av boats tied up, so I tuk wan an' wint across the river. Thin I came home acrost country, lyin' up by day."

"How on earth did you manage?" I said.

"How did Sir Frederick Roberts get from Cabul to Candahar? He marched, an' 'e niver tould how near he was to breakin' down. That's why he is fwhat he is. An' now"—Mulvaney yawned portentously—"now I will go an' give mesilf up for absince widout leave. It's eight-an'-twinty days an' the rough end of the colonel's tongue in orderly-room any way you look at ut. But 'tis cheap at the price."

"Mulvaney," said I, softly, "if there happens to be any sort of excuse that the colonel can in any way accept, I have a notion that you'll get nothing more than the dressing down. The new recruits are in, and——"

"Not a word more, sorr. Is ut excuses the ould man wants? 'Tis not my way, but he shall have thim. I'll tell him I was engaged in financial operations connected wid a church," and he flapped his way to cantonments and the cells, singing lustily:

> "So they sent a corp'ril's file,
> And they put me in the gyard room
> For conduck unbecomin' of a soldier."

And when he was lost in the haze of the moonlight we could hear the refrain:

> "Bang upon the big drum, bash upon the cymbals,
> As we go marchin' along, boys oh!
> For although in this campaign
> There's no whisky nor champagne,
> We'll keep our spirits goin' with a song, boys!"

Therewith he surrendered himself to the joyful and almost weeping guard, and was made much of by his fellows. But to the colonel he said that he had been smitten with sunstroke and had lain insensible on a villager's cot for untold hours, and between laughter and goodwill the affair was smoothed over, so that he could next day teach the new recruits how to "Fear God, Honor the Queen, Shoot Straight, and Keep Clean."

There is no further space to record the digging up of the spoils, or the triumphal visit of the three to Dearsley, who feared for his life, but was most royally treated instead, and under that influence told how the palanquin had come into his possession. But that is another story.

WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CLERGY

I

"But if it be a girl?"

"Lord of my life, it cannot be! I have

prayed for so many nights, and sent gifts to Sheikh Badl's shrine so often, that I know God will give us a son—a man-child that shall grow into a man. Think of this and be glad. My mother shall be his mother till I can take him again, and the mullah of the Pattan Mosque shall cast his nativity—God send he be born, in an auspicious hour!—and then, and then thou wilt never weary of me, thy slave."

"Since when hast thou been a slave, my queen?"

"Since the beginning—till this mercy came to me. How could I be sure of thy love when I knew that I had been bought with silver?"

"Nay, that was the dowry. I paid it to thy mother."

"And she has buried it, and sits upon it all day long like a hen. What talk is yours of dowry! I was bought as though I had been a Lucknow dancing-girl instead of a child."

"Art thou sorry for the sale?"

"I have sorrowed; but to-day I am glad. Thou wilt never cease to love me now? Answer, my king."

"Never—never. No."

"Not even though the *mem-log*—the white women of thy own blood—love thee? And remember, I have watched them driving in the evening; they are very fair."

"I have seen fire-balloons by the hundred, I have seen the moon, and—then I saw no more fire-balloons."

Ameera clapped her hands and laughed. "Very good talk," she said. Then, with an assumption of great stateliness: "It is enough. Thou hast my permission to depart—if thou wilt."

The man did not move. He was sitting on a low red-lacquered couch in a room furnished only with a blue-and-white floor-cloth, some rugs, and a very complete collection of native cushions. At his feet sat a woman of sixteen, and she was all but all the world in his eyes. By every rule and law she should have been otherwise, for he was an Englishman and she a Mussulman's daughter, bought two years before from her mother, who, being left without money, would have sold Ameera, shrieking, to the Prince of Darkness, if the price had been sufficient.

It was a contract entered into with a light heart. But even before the girl had reached her bloom she came to fill the greater portion of John Holden's life. For her and the withered hag her mother he had taken a little house overlooking the great red-walled city, and found, when the marigolds had sprung up by the well in the courtyard, and Ameera had established herself according to her own ideas of comfort, and her mother had ceased grumbling at the inadequacy of the cooking-places, the distance from the daily market, and matters of housekeeping in general, that the house was to him his home. Any one could enter his bachelor's bungalow by day or night, and the life that he led there was an unlovely one. In the house in the city his feet only could pass beyond the outer courtyard to the women's rooms; and when the big wooden gate was bolted behind him he was king in his own territory, with Ameera for queen. And there was going to be added to this kingdom a third person, whose arrival Holden felt inclined to resent. It interfered with his perfect happiness. It disarranged the orderly peace of the house that was his own. But Ameera was wild with delight at the thought of it, and her mother not less so. The love of a man, and particularly a white man, was at the best an inconstant affair, but it might, both women argued, be held fast by a baby's hands. "And then," Ameera would always say—"then he will never care for the white

mem-log. I hate them all—I hate them all."

"He will go back to his own people in time," said the mother; "but, by the blessing of God, that time is yet afar off."

Holden sat silent on the couch, thinking of the future, and his thoughts were not pleasant. The drawbacks of a double life are manifold. The government, with singular care, had ordered him out of the station for a fortnight on special duty, in the place of a man who was watching by the bedside of a sick wife. The verbal notification of the transfer had been edged by a cheerful remark that Holden ought to think himself lucky in being a bachelor and a free man. He came to break the news to Ameera.

"It is not good," she said slowly, "but it is not all bad. There is my mother here, and no harm will come to me—unless, indeed, I die of pure joy. Go thou to thy work, and think no troublesome thoughts. When the days are done, I believe . . . nay, I am sure. And—and then I shall lav *him* in thy arms, and thou wilt love me forever. The train goes to-night at midnight, is it not? Go now, and do not let thy heart be heavy by cause of me. But thou wilt not delay in returning! Thou wilt not stay on the road to talk to the bold white *mem-log!* Come back to me swiftly, my life!"

As he left the court-yard to reach his horse, that was tethered to the gate-post, Holden spoke to the white-haired old watchman who guarded the house, and bid him under certain contingencies despatch the filled-up telegraph form that Holden gave him. It was all that could be done, and, with the sensations of a man who has attended his own funeral, Holden went away by the night mail to his exile. Every hour of the day he dreaded the arrival of the telegram, and every hour of the night he pictured to himself the death of Ameera. In consequence, his work for the state was not of first-rate quality, nor was his temper towards his colleagues of the most amiable. The fortnight ended without a sign from his home, and, torn to pieces by his anxieties, Holden returned to be swallowed up for two precious hours by a dinner at the club, wherein he heard, as a man hears in a swoon, voices telling him how execrably he had performed the other man's duties, and how he had endeared himself to all his associates. Then he fled on horseback through the night with his heart in his mouth. There was no answer at first to his blows on the gate, and he had just wheeled his horse round to kick it in, when Pir Khan appeared with a lantern and held his stirrup.

"Has aught occurred?" said Holden.

"The news does not come from my mouth, Protector of the Poor, but——" He held out his shaking hand, as befitted the bearer of good news who is entitled to a reward.

Holden hurried through the court-yard. A light burned in the upper room. His horse neighed in the gateway, and he heard a pin-pointed wail that sent all the blood into the apple of his throat. It was a new voice, but it did not prove that Ameera was alive.

"Who is there?" he called up the narrow brick staircase.

There was a cry of delight from Ameera, and then the voice of the mother, tremulous with old age and pride: "We be two women, and—the—man—thy son."

On the threshold of the room Holden stepped on a naked dagger that was laid there to avert ill luck, and it broke at the hilt under his impatient heel.

"God is great!" cooed Ameera in the half-light. "Thou hast taken his misfortunes on thy head."

"Ay, but how is it with thee, life of my life? Old woman, how is it with her?"

"She has forgotten her sufferings for joy that the child is born. There is no harm; but speak softly," said the mother.

"It only needed thy presence to make me all well," said Ameera. "My king, thou hast been very long away. What gifts hast thou for me? Ah, ah! It is I that bring gifts this time. Look, my life, look. Was there ever such a babe? Nay, I am too weak even to clear my arm from him."

"Rest, then, and do not talk. I am here, *bachheri*" (little woman).

"Well said, for there is a bond and a heel-rope (*peecharee*) between us now that nothing can break. Look—canst thou see in this light? He is without spot or blemish. Never was such a man-child. *Ya illah!* he shall be a pundit—no, a trooper of the queen. And, my life, dost thou love me as well as ever, though I am faint and sick and worn? Answer truly."

"Yea. I love as I have loved, with all my soul. Lie still, pearl, and rest."

"Then do not go. Sit by my side here—so. Mother, the lord of this house needs a cushion. Bring it." There was an almost imperceptible movement on the part of the new life that lay in the hollow of Ameera's arm. "Aho!" she said, her voice breaking with love. "The babe is a champion from his birth. He is kicking me in the side with mighty kicks. Was there ever such a babe! And he is ours to us—thine and mine. Put thy hand on his head, but carefully, for he is very young, and men are unskilled in such matters."

Very cautiously Holden touched with the tips of his fingers the downy head.

"He is of the Faith," said Ameera; "for, lying here in the night-watches, I whispered the Call to Prayer and the Profession of Faith into his ears. And it is most marvelous that he was born upon a Friday, as I was born. Be careful of him, my life; but he can almost grip with his hands."

Holden found one helpless little hand that closed feebly on his finger. And the clutch ran through his limbs till it settled about his heart. Till then his sole thought had been for Ameera. He began to realize that there was some one else in the world, but he could not feel that it was a veritable son with a soul. He sat down to think, and Ameera dozed lightly.

"Get hence, sahib," said her mother, under her breath. "It is not good that she should find you here on waking. She must be still."

"I go," said Holden, submissively. "Here be rupees. See that my *baba* gets fat and finds all that he needs."

The chink of silver roused Ameera. "I am his mother, and no hireling," she said weakly. "Shall I look to him more or less for the sake of money? Mother, give it back. I have borne my lord a son."

The deep sleep of weakness came upon her almost before the sentence was completed. Holden went down to the courtyard very softly, with his heart at ease. Pir Khan, the old watchman, was chuckling with delight.

"This house is now complete," he said, and without further comment thrust into Holden's hands the hilt of a sabre worn many years ago, when Pir Khan served the queen in the police. The bleat of a tethered goat came from the well-curb.

"There be two," said Pir Khan—"two goats of the best. I bought them, and they cost much money; and since there is no birth-party assembled, their flesh will be all mine. Strike craftily, sahib! 'Tis an ill-balanced sabre at the best. Wait till they raise their heads from cropping the marigolds."

"And why?" said Holden, bewildered.

"For the birth sacrifice. What else? Otherwise the child, being unguarded

from fate, may die. The Protector of the Poor knows the fitting words to be said."

Holden had learned them once, with little thought that he would ever say them in earnest. The touch of the cold sabre-hilt in his palm turned suddenly to the clinging grip of the child upstairs —the child that was his own son—and a dread of loss filled him.

"Strike!" said Pir Khan. "Never life came into the world but life was paid for it. See, the goats have raised their heads. Now! With a drawing cut!"

Hardly knowing what he did, Holden cut twice as he muttered the Mohammedan prayer that runs: "Almighty! In place of this my son I offer life for life, blood for blood, head for head, bone for bone, hair for hair, skin for skin." The waiting horse snorted and bounded in his pickets at the smell of raw blood that spirted over Holden's riding-boots.

"Well smitten!" said Pir Khan, wiping the sabre. "A swordsman was lost in thee. Go with a light heart, heaven born. I am thy servant and the servant of thy son. May the Presence live a thousand years, and . . . the flesh of the goats is all mine?"

Pir Khan drew back richer by a month's pay. Holden swung himself into the saddle and rode off through the low-hanging wood smoke of the evening. He was full of riotous exultation, alternating with a vast vague tenderness directed towards no particular object, that made him choke as he bent over the neck of his uneasy horse. "I never felt like this in my life," he thought. "I'll go to the club and pull myself together."

A game of pool was beginning, and the room was full of men. Holden entered, eager to get to the light and the company of his fellows, singing at the top of his voice:

'In Baltimore a-walking, a lady I did meet!'

"Did you?" said the club secretary from his corner. "Did she happen to tell you that your boots were wringing wet? Great goodness, man, it's blood!"

"Bosh!" said Holden, picking his cue from the rack. "May I cut in? It's dew. I've been riding through high crops. My faith! my boots are in a mess, though!

'And if it be a girl, she shall wear a wedding-ring;
And if it be a boy, he shall fight for his king;
With his dirk and his cap, and his little jacket blue,
He shall walk the quarter-deck——'

"Yellow and blue—green next player," said the marker, monotonously.

" 'He shall walk the quarter-deck,'—am I green, marker? he shall walk the quarter-deck,—ouch! that's a bad shot! —as his daddy used to do!' "

"I don't see that you have anything to crow about," said a zealous junior civilian, acidly. "The government is not exactly pleased with your work when you relieved Sanders."

"Does that mean a wigging from headquarters?" said Holden, with an abstracted smile. "I think I can stand it."

The talk beat up round the ever-fresh subject of each man's work, and steadied Holden till it was time to go to his dark, empty bungalow, where his butler received him as one who knew all his affairs. Holden remained awake for the greater part of the night, and his dreams were pleasant ones.

II.

"How old is he now?"

"Ya illah! What a man's question! He is all but six weeks old; and on this night I go up to the house-top with thee, my life, to count the stars. For that is auspicious. And he was born on a Friday,

under the sign of the Sun, and it has been told to me that he will outlive us both and get wealth. Can we wish for aught better, beloved?"

"There is nothing better. Let us go up to the roof, and thou shalt count the stars—but a few only, for the sky is heavy with cloud."

"The winter rains are late, and maybe they come out of season. Come, before all the stars are hid. I have put on my richest jewels."

"Thou hast forgotten the best of all."

"Ai! *Ours*. He comes also. He has never yet seen the skies."

Ameera climbed the narrow staircase that led to the flat roof. The child, placid and unwinking, lay in the hollow of her right arm, gorgeous in silver-fringed muslin, with a small skull-cap on his head. Ameera wore all that she valued most. The diamond nose-stud that takes the place of the Western patch in drawing attention to the curve of the nostril, the gold ornament in the center of the forehead studded with tallow-drop emeralds and flawed rubies, the heavy circlet of beaten gold that was fastened round her neck by the softness of the pure metal, and the chinking curb-patterned silver anklets hanging low over the rosy anklebone. She was dressed in jade-green muslin, as befitted a daughter of the Faith, and from shoulder to elbow and elbow to wrist ran bracelets of silver tied with floss silk, frail glass bangles slipped over the wrist in proof of the slenderness of the hand, and certain heavy gold bracelets that had no part in her country's ornaments, but since they were Holden's gift, and fastened with a cunning European snap, delighted her immensely.

They sat down by the low white parapet of the roof, overlooking the city and its lights.

"They are happy down there," said Ameera. "But I do not think that they are as happy as we. Nor do I think the white *mem-log* are as happy. And thou?"

"I know they are not."

"How dost thou know?"

"They give their children over to the nurses."

"I have never seen that," said Ameera, with a sigh; "nor do I wish to see. Ahi!"—she dropped her head on Holden's shoulder,—"I have counted forty stars, and I am tired. Look at the child, love of my life. He is counting, too."

The baby was staring with round eyes at the dark of the heavens. Ameera placed him in Holden's arms, and he lay there without a cry.

"What shall we call him among ourselves?" she said. "Look! Art thou ever tired of looking? He carries thy very eyes! But the mouth——"

"Is thine, most dear. Who should know better than I?"

"'Tis such a feeble mouth. Oh, so small! And yet it holds my heart between its lips. Give him to me now. He has been too long away."

"Nay, let him lie; he has not yet begun to cry."

"When he cries thou wilt give him back, eh? What a man of mankind thou art! If he cried, he were only the dearer to me. But, my life, what little name shall we give him?"

The small body lay close to Holden's heart. It was utterly helpless and very soft. He scarcely dared to breathe for fear of crushing it. The caged green parrot, that is regarded as a sort of guardian spirit in most native households, moved on its perch and fluttered a drowsy wing.

"There is the answer," said Holden. "Mian Mittu has spoken. He shall be the parrot. When he is ready he will talk mightily, and run about. Mian Mittu is the parrot in thy—in the Mussulman tongue, is it not?"

"Why put me so far off?" said Ameera, fretfully. "Let it be like unto some English name—but not wholly. For he is mine."

"Then call him Tota, for that is likest English."

"Ay, Tota; and that is still the parrot. Forgive me, my lord, for a minute ago; but, in truth, he is too little to wear all the weight of Mian Mittu for name. He shall be Tota—our Tota to us. Hearest thou, oh, small one? Littlest, thou art Tota."

She touched the child's cheek, and, he waking, wailed, and it was necessary to return him to his mother, who soothed him with the wonderful rhyme of *Aré koko, Ja ré koko!* which says:

"Oh, crow! Go crow! Baby's sleeping sound,
And the wild plums grow in the jungle, only a penny a pound—
Only a penny a pound, *Baba*—only a penny a pound."

Reassured many times as to the price of those plums, Tota cuddled himself down to sleep. The two sleek white well-bullocks in the courtyard were steadily chewing the cud of their evening meal; old Pir Khan squatted at the head of Holden's horse, his police sabre across his knees, pulling drowsily at a big water-pipe that croaked like a bull-frog in a pond. Ameera's mother sat spinning in the lower veranda, and the wooden gate was shut and barred. The music of a marriage-procession came to the roof above the gentle hum of the city, and a string of flying-foxes crossed the face of the low moon.

"I have prayed," said Ameera, after a long pause, with her chin in her hand—"I have prayed for two things. First, that I may die in thy stead, if thy death is demanded; and in the second, that I may die in the place of the child. I have prayed to the Prophet and to Beebee Miriam.[1] Thinkest thou either will hear?"

"From thy lips who would not hear the lightest word?"

"I asked for straight talk, and thou hast given me sweet talk. Will my prayers be heard?"

"How can I say? God is very good."

"Of that I am not sure. Listen now. When I die or the child dies, what is thy fate? Living, thou wilt return to the bold white *mem-log,* for kind calls to kind."

"Not always."

"With a woman, no. With a man it is otherwise. Thou wilt in this life, later on, go back to thine own folk. That I could almost endure, for I should be dead. But in thy very death thou wilt be taken away to a strange place and a paradise that I do not know."

"Will it be paradise?"

"Surely; for what God would harm thee? But we two—I and the child—shall be elsewhere, and we cannot come to thee, nor canst thou come to us. In the old days, before the child was born, I did not think of these things; but now I think of them perpetually. It is very hard talk."

"It will fall as it will fall. To-morrow we do not know, but to-day and love we know well. Surely we are happy now."

"So happy that it were well to make our happiness assured. And thy Beebee Miriam should listen to me; for she is also a woman. But then she would envy me—It is not seemly for men to worship a woman."

Holden laughed aloud at Ameera's little spasm of jealousy.

"Is it not seemly? Why didst thou not turn me from worship of thee, then?"

"Thou a worshiper! And of me! My king, for all thy sweet words, well I know that I am thy servant and thy slave, and the dust under thy feet. And I would not have it otherwise. See!"

[1] The Virgin Mary.

Before Holden could prevent her she stooped forward and touched his feet; recovering herself with a little laugh, she hugged Tota closer to her bosom. Then, almost savagely:

"Is it true that the bold white *mem-log* live for three times the length of my life? Is it true that they make their marriages not before they are old women?"

"They marry as do others—when they are women."

"That I know, but they wed when they are twenty-five. Is that true?"

"That is true."

"*Ya illah!* At twenty-five! Who would of his own will take a wife even of eighteen? She is a woman—aging every hour. Twenty-five! I shall be an old woman at that age, and—Those *mem-log* remain young forever. How I hate them!"

"What have they to do with us?"

"I cannot tell. I know only that there may now be alive on this earth a woman ten years older than I who may come to thee and take thy love ten years after I am an old woman, gray-headed, and the nurse of Tota's son. That is unjust and evil. They should die too."

"Now, for all thy years thou art a child, and shalt be picked up and carried down the staircase."

"Tota! Have a care for Tota, my lord! Thou at least art as foolish as any babe!" Ameera tucked Tota out of harm's way in the hollow of her neck, and was carried downstairs, laughing, in Holden's arms, while Tota opened his eyes and smiled, after the manner of the lesser angels.

He was a silent infant, and almost before Holden could realize that he was in the world, developed into a small gold-colored godling and unquestioned despot of the house overlooking the city. Those were months of absolute happiness to Holden and Ameera—happiness withdrawn from the world, shut in behind the wooden gate that Pir Khan guarded. By day Holden did his work, with an immense pity for such as were not so fortunate as himself, and a sympathy for small children that amazed and amused many mothers at the little station gatherings. At nightfall he returned to Ameera—Ameera full of the wondrous doings of Tota: how he had been seen to clap his hands together and move his fingers with intention and purpose, which was manifestly a miracle; how, later, he had of his own initiative crawled out of his low bedstead on to the floor, and swayed on both feet for the space of three breaths. "And they were long breaths, for my heart stood still with delight," said Ameera.

Then he took the beasts into his councils—the well-bullocks, the little gray squirrels, the mongoose that lived in a hole near the well, and especially Mian Mittu, the parrot, whose tail he grievously pulled, and Mian Mittu screamed till Ameera and Holden arrived.

"O villain! Child of strength! This is to thy brother on the house-top! *Tobah, tobah!* Fie! Fie! But I know a charm to make him wise as Suleiman and Aflatoun.[1] Now look," said Ameera. She drew from an embroidered bag a handful of almonds. "See! we count seven. In the name of God!" She placed Mian Mittu, very angry and rumpled, on the top of his cage, and, seating herself between the babe and the bird, she cracked and peeled an almond less white than her teeth. "This is a true charm, my life; and do not laugh. See! I give the parrot one half and Tota the other." Mian Mittu, with careful beak, took his share from between Ameera's lips, and she kissed the other half into the mouth of the child, who ate it slowly, with wondering eyes. "This I will do each day of seven, and without doubt he who

[1] Solomon and Plato.

is ours will be a bold speaker and wise. Eh, Tota, what wilt thou be when thou art a man and I am gray-headed?" Tota tucked his fat legs into adorable creases. He could crawl, but he was not going to waste the spring of his youth in idle speech. He wanted Mian Mittu's tail to tweak.

When he was advanced to the dignity of a silver belt—which, with a magic square engraved on silver and hung round his neck, made up the greater part of his clothing—he staggered on a perilous journey down the garden to Pir Khan, and proffered him all his jewels in exchange for one little ride on Holden's horse. He had seen his mother's mother chaffering with pedlars in the veranda. Pir Khan wept, and set the untried feet on his own gray head in sign of fealty, and brought the bold adventurer to his mother's arms, vowing that Tota would be a leader of men ere his beard was grown.

One hot evening, while he sat on the roof between his father and mother, watching the never-ending warfare of the kites that the city boys flew, he demanded a kite of his own, with Pir Khan to fly it, because he had a fear of dealing with anything larger than himself; and when Holden called him a "spark," he rose to his feet and answered slowly, in defence of his new-found individuality: "*Hum 'park nahin hai. Hum admi hai*" (I am no spark, but a man).

The protest made Holden choke, and devote himself very seriously to a consideration of Tota's future.

He need hardly have taken the trouble. The delight of that life was too perfect to endure. Therefore it was taken away, as many things are taken away in India, suddenly and without warning. The little lord of the house, as Pir Khan called him, grew sorrowful and complained of pains, who had never known the meaning of pain. Ameera, wild with terror, watched him through the night, and in the dawning of the second day the life was shaken out of him by fever—the seasonable autumn fever. It seemed altogether impossible that he could die, and neither Ameera nor Holden at first believed the evidence of the body on the bedstead. Then Ameera beat her head against the wall, and would have flung herself down the well in the garden had Holden not restrained her by main force.

One mercy only was granted to Holden. He rode to his office in broad daylight, and found waiting him an unusually heavy mail that demanded concentrated attention and hard work. He was not, however, alive to this kindness of the gods.

III.

The first shock of a bullet is no more than a brisk pinch. The wrecked body does not send in its protest to the soul till ten or fifteen seconds later. Then comes thirst, throbbing, and agony, and a ridiculous amount of screaming. Holden realised his pain slowly, exactly as he had realised his happiness, and with the same imperious necessity for hiding all trace of it. In the beginning he only felt that there had been a loss, and that Ameera needed comforting where she sat with her head on her knees, shivering as Mian Mittu, from the house-top, called "Tota! Tota! Tota!" Later all his world and the daily life of it rose up to hurt him. It was an outrage that any one of the children at the band-stand in the evening should be alive and clamorous when his own child lay dead. It was more than mere pain when one of them touched him, and stories told by overfond fathers of their children's latest performances cut him to the quick. He could not declare his pain. He had neither help, comfort, nor sympathy, and Ameera, at the end of each

weary day, would lead him through the hell of self-questioning reproach which is reserved for those who have lost a child, and believe that with a little—just a little—more care it might have been saved. There are not many hells worse than this, but he knows one who has sat down temporarily to consider whether he is or is not responsible for the death of his wife.

"Perhaps," Ameera would say, "I did not take sufficient heed. Did I, or did I not? The sun on the roof that day when he played so long alone, and I was—*ahi!* braiding my hair—it may be that the sun then bred the fever. If I had warned him from the sun he might have lived. But, oh, my life, say that I am guiltless! Thou knowest that I loved him as I loved thee! Say that there is no blame on me, or I shall die—I shall die!"

"There is no blame. Before God, none. It was written, and how could we do aught to save? What has been, has been. Let it go, beloved."

"He was all my heart to me. How can I let the thought go when my arm tells me every night that he is not here? *Ahi! Ahi!* Oh, Tota, come back to me—come back again, and let us be all together as it was before!"

"Peace, peace! For thine own sake, and for mine also, if thou lovest me, rest."

"By this I know thou dost not care; and how shouldst thou? The white men have hearts of stone and souls of iron. Oh, that I had married a man of mine own people—though he beat me—and had never eaten the bread of an alien!"

"Am I an alien, mother of my son?"

"What else, sahib? . . . Oh, forgive me—forgive! The death has driven me mad. Thou art the life of my heart, and the light of my eyes, and the breath of my life, and—and I have put thee from me, though it was but for a moment. If thou goest away, to whom shall I look for help? Do not be angry. Indeed, it was the pain that spoke, and not thy slave."

"I know—I know. We be two who were three. The greater need, therefore, that we should be one."

They were sitting on the roof, as of custom. The night was a warm one in early spring, and sheet-lighting was dancing on the horizon to a broken tune played by far-off thunder. Ameera settled herself in Holden's arms.

"The dry earth is lowing like a cow for the rain, and I—I am afraid. It was not like this when we counted the stars. But thou lovest me as much as before, though a bond is taken away? Answer."

"I love more, because a new bond has come out of the sorrow that we have eaten together; and that thou knowest."

"Yea, I knew," said Ameera, in a very small whisper. "But it is good to hear thee say so, my life, who art so strong to help. I will be a child no more, but a woman and an aid to thee. Listen! Give me my *sitar,* and I will sing bravely."

She took the light silver-studded *sitar,* and began a song of the great hero Rajah Rasalu. The hand failed on the strings, the tune halted, checked, and at a low note turned off to the poor little nursery rhyme about the wicked crow:

> And the wild plums grow in the jungle—
> Only a penny a pound,
> Only a penny a pound, *Baba*—only . . .

Then came the tears, and the piteous rebellion against fate, till she slept, moaning a little in her sleep, with the right arm thrown clear of the body, as though it protected something that was not there.

It was after this night that life became a little easier for Holden. The ever-present pain of loss drove him into his work, and the work repaid him by filling up his mind for eight or nine hours a day. Ameera sat alone in the house and brooded, but grew happier when she un-

derstood that Holden was more at ease, according to the custom of women. They touched happiness again, but this time with caution.

"It was because we loved Tota that he died. The jealousy of God was upon us," said Ameera. "I have hung up a large black jar before our window to turn the Evil Eye from us, and we must make no protestations of delight, but go softly underneath the stars, lest God find us out. Is that not good talk, worthless one?"

She had shifted the accent on the word that means "beloved," in proof of the sincerity of her purpose. But the kiss that followed the new christening was a thing that any deity might have envied. They went about henceforth saying: "It is naught—it is naught," and hoping that all the powers heard.

The powers were busy on other things. They had allowed thirty million people four years of plenty, wherein men fed well and the crops were certain and the birth-rate rose year by year; the districts reported a purely agricultural population varying from nine hundred to two thousand to the square mile of the overburdened earth. It was time to make room. And the Member of the Lower Tooting, wandering about India in top-hat and frock-coat, talked largely of the benefits of British rule, and suggested as the one thing needful the establishment of a duly qualified electoral system and a general bestowal of the franchise. His long-suffering hosts smiled and made him welcome, and when he paused to admire, with pretty picked words, the blossom of the blood-red dhak-tree, that had flowered untimely for a sign of the sickness that was coming, they smiled more than ever.

It was the Deputy Commissioner of Kot-Kumharsen, staying at the club for a day, who lightly told a tale that made Holden's blood run cold as he overheard the end.

"He won't bother any one any more. Never saw a man so astonished in my life. By Jove! I thought he meant to ask a question in the House about it. Fellow-passenger in his ship—dined next him—bowled over by cholera, and died in eighteen hours. You needn't laugh, you fellows. The Member for Lower Tooting is awfully angry about it; but he's more scared. I think he's going to take his enlightened self out of India."

"I'd give a good deal if he were knocked over. It might keep a few vestrymen of his kidney to their parish. But what's this about cholera? It's full early for anything of that kind," said a warden of an unprofitable salt-lick.

"Dunno," said the deputy commissioner, reflectively. "We've got locusts with us. There's sporadic cholera all along the north—at least, we're calling it sporadic for decency's sake. The spring crops are short in five districts, and nobody seems to know where the winter rains are. It's nearly March now. I don't want to scare anybody, but it seems to me that Nature's going to audit her accounts with a big red pencil this summer."

"Just when I wanted to take leave, too," said a voice across the room.

"There won't be much leave this year, but there ought to be a great deal of promotion. I've come in to persuade the government to put my pet canal on the list of famine-relief works. It's an ill-wind that blows no good. I shall get that canal finished at last."

"Is it the old programme, then," said Holden—"famine, fever, and cholera?"

"Oh no! Only local scarcity and an unusual prevalence of seasonal sickness. You'll find it all in the reports if you live till next year. You're a lucky chap. You haven't got a wife to put you out of harm's way. The hill-stations ought to be full of women this year."

"I think you're inclined to exaggerate the talk in the bazaars," said a young civilian in the secretariat. "Now, I have observed——"

"I daresay you have," said the deputy commissioner, "but you've a great deal more to observe, my son. In the meantime, I wish to observe to you—" And he drew him aside to discuss the construction of the canal that was so dear to his heart.

Holden went to his bungalow, and began to understand that he was not alone in the world, and also that he was afraid for the sake of another, which is the most soul-satisfying fear known to man.

Two months later, as the deputy had foretold, Nature began to audit her accounts with a red pencil. On the heels of the spring reapings came a cry for bread, and the government, which had decreed that no man should die of want, sent wheat. Then came the cholera from all four quarters of the compass. It struck a pilgrim gathering of half a million at a sacred shrine. Many died at the feet of their god, the others broke and ran over the face of the land, carrying the pestilence with them. It smote a walled city and killed two hundred a day. The people crowded the trains, hanging on to the footboards and squatting on the roofs of the carriages; and the cholera followed them, for at each station they dragged out the dead and the dying on the platforms reeking of lime-wash and carbolic acid. They died by the roadside, and the horses of the Englishmen shied at the corpses in the grass. The rains did not come, and the earth turned to iron lest man should escape death by hiding in her. The English sent their wives away to the Hills, and went about their work, coming forward as they were bidden to fill the gaps in the fighting line. Holden, sick with fear of losing his chiefest treasure on earth, had done his best to persuade Ameera to go away with her mother to the Himalayas.

"Why should I go?" said she one evening on the roof.

"There is sickness, and people are dying, and all the white *mem-log* have gone."

"All of them?"

"All—unless, perhaps, there remains some old scald-head who vexes her husband's heart by running risk of death."

"Nay; who stays is my sister, and thou must not abuse her, for I will be a scald-head too. I am glad all the bold *mem-log* are gone."

"Do I speak to a woman or a babe? Go to the Hills and I will see to it that thou goest like a queen's daughter. Think, child! In a red-lacquered bullock-cart, veiled and curtained, with brass peacocks upon the pole and red-cloth hangings. I will send two orderlies for guard, and——"

"Peace! Thou art the babe in speaking thus. What use are those toys to me? *He* would have patted the bullocks and played with the housings. For his sake, perhaps—thou hast made me very English—I might have gone. Now I will not. Let the *mem-log* run."

"Their husbands are sending them, beloved."

"Very good talk. Since when hast thou been my husband to tell me what to do? I have but borne thee a son. Thou art only all the desire of my soul to me. How shall I depart when I know that if evil befall thee by the breadth of so much as my littlest finger-nail—is that not small? —I should be aware of it though I were in Paradise. And here, this summer thou mayest die—*ai, Janee,* die!—and in dying they might call to tend thee a white woman, and she would rob me in the last of thy love."

"But love is not born in a moment, or on a deathbed."

"What dost thou know of love, stone-

heart? She would take thy thanks at least, and, by God and the Prophet and Beebee Miriam, the mother of thy Prophet, that I will never endure. My lord and my love, let there be no more foolish talk of going away. Where thou art, I am. It is enough." She put an arm round his neck and a hand on his mouth.

There are not many happinesses so complete as those that are snatched under the shadow of the sword. They sat together and laughed, calling each other openly by every pet name that could move the wrath of the gods. The city below them was locked up in its own torments. Sulphur-fires blazed in the streets; the conches in the Hindu temples screamed and bellowed, for the gods were inattentive in those days. There was a service in the great Mohammedan shrine, and the call to prayer from the minarets was almost unceasing. They heard the wailing in the houses of the dead, and once the shriek of a mother who had lost a child and was calling for its return. In the gray dawn they saw the dead borne out through the city gates, each litter with its own little knot of mourners. Wherefore they kissed each other and shivered.

It was a red and heavy audit, for the land was very sick and needed a little breathing-space ere the torrent of cheap life should flood it anew. The children of immature fathers and undeveloped mothers made no resistance. They were cowed and sat still, waiting till the sword should be sheathed in November, if it were so willed. There were gaps among the English, but the gaps were filled. The work of superintending famine-relief, cholera-sheds, medicine distribution, and what little sanitation was possible, went forward because it was so ordered.

Holden had been told to hold himself in readiness to move to replace the next man who should fall. There were twelve hours in each day when he could not see Ameera, and she might die in three. He was considering what his pain would be if he could not see her for three months, or if she died out of his sight. He was absolutely certain that her death would be demanded—so certain that, when he looked up from the telegram and saw Pir Khan breathless in the doorway, he laughed aloud, "And?—" said he.

"When there is a cry in the night and the spirit flutters into the throat, who has a charm that will restore? Come swiftly, heaven born! It is the black cholera."

Holden galloped to his home. The sky was heavy with clouds, for the long-deferred rains were at hand, and the heat was stifling. Ameera's mother met him in the courtyard, whimpering: "She is dying. She is nursing herself into death. She is all but dead. What shall I do, sahib?"

Ameera was lying in the room in which Tota had been born. She made no sign when Holden entered, because the human soul is a very lonely thing, and when it is getting ready to go away hides itself in a misty borderland where the living may not follow. The black cholera does its work quietly and without explanation. Ameera was being thrust out of life as though the Angel of Death had himself put his hand upon her. The quick breathing seemed to show that she was either afraid or in pain, but neither eyes nor mouth gave any answer to Holden's kisses. There was nothing to be said or done. Holden could only wait and suffer. The first drops of the rain began to fall on the roof, and he could hear shouts of joy in the parched city.

The soul came back a little and the lips moved. Holden bent down to listen. "Keep nothing of mine," said Ameera. "Take no hair from my head. *She* would make thee burn it later on. That flame I should feel. Lower! Stoop lower! Remember only that I was thine and bore

thee a son. Though thou wed a white woman to-morrow, the pleasure of taking in thy arms thy first son is taken from thee forever. Remember me when thy son is born—the one that shall carry thy name before all men. His misfortunes be on my head. I bear witness—I bear witness"—the lips were forming the words on his ear—"that there is no God but—thee, beloved."

Then she died. Holden sat still, and all thought of any kind was taken from him till he heard Ameera's mother lift the curtain.

"Is she dead, sahib?"

"She is dead."

"Then I will mourn, and afterward take an inventory of the furniture in this house; for that will be mine. The sahib does not mean to resume it? It is so little, so very little, sahib, and I am an old woman. I would like to lie softly."

"For the mercy of God, be silent a while! Go out and mourn where I cannot hear."

"Sahib, she will be buried in four hours."

"I know the custom. I shall go ere she is taken away. That matter is in thy hands. Look to it that the bed—on which—on which—she lies——"

"Aha! That beautiful red-lacquered bed. I have long desired——"

—"That the bed is left here untouched for my disposal. All else in the house is thine. Hire a cart, take everything, go hence, and before sunrise let there be nothing in this house but that which I have ordered thee to respect."

"I am an old woman. I would stay at least for the days of mourning, and the rains have just broken. Whither shall I go?"

"What is that to me? My order is that there is a going. The house-gear is worth a thousand rupees and my orderly shall bring thee a hundred rupees to-night."

"That is very little. Think of the cart-hire."

"It shall be nothing unless thou goest, and with speed. O woman, get hence, and leave me with my dead!"

The mother shuffled down the staircase, and in her anxiety to take stock of the house-fittings forgot to mourn. Holden stayed by Ameera's side, and the rain roared on the roof. He could not think connectedly by reason of the noise, though he made many attempts to do so. Then four sheeted ghosts glided dripping into the room and stared at him through their veils. They were the washers of the dead. Holden left the room and went out to his horse. He had come in a dead, stifling calm, through ankle-deep dust. He found the courtyard a rain-lashed pond alive with frogs; a torrent of yellow water ran under the gate, and a roaring wind drove the bolts of the rain like buckshot against the mud walls. Pir Khan was shivering in his little hut by the gate, and the horse was stamping uneasily in the water.

"I have been told the sahib's order," said he. "It is well. This house is now desolate. I go also, for my monkey face would be a reminder of that which has been. Concerning the bed, I will bring that to thy house yonder in the morning. But remember, sahib, it will be to thee a knife turned in a green wound. I go upon a pilgrimage and I will take no money. I have grown fat in the protection of the Presence, whose sorrow is my sorrow. For the last time I hold his stirrup."

He touched Holden's foot with both hands, and the horse sprung out into the road, where the creaking bamboos were whipping the sky and all the frogs were chuckling. Holden could not see for the rain in his face. He put his hands before

his eyes and muttered: "Oh you brute! You utter brute!"

The news of his trouble was already in his bungalow. He read the knowledge in his butler's eyes when Ahmed Khan brought in food, and for the first and last time in his life laid a hand upon his master's shoulder, saying, "Eat, sahib, eat. Meat is good against sorrow. I also have known. Moreover, the shadows come and go, sahib. The shadows come and go. These be curried eggs."

Holden could neither eat nor sleep. The heavens sent down eight inches of rain in that night and scoured the earth clean. The waters tore down walls, broke roads, and washed open the shallow graves in the Mohammedan burying-ground. All next day it rained, and Holden sat still in his house considering his sorrow. On the morning of the third day he received a telegram which said only: "Ricketts, Myndonie. Dying. Holden. Relieve. Immediate." Then he thought that before he departed he would look at the house wherein he had been master and lord. There was a break in the weather. The rank earth steamed with vapour, and Holden was vermilion from head to heel with the prickly-heat born of sultry moisture.

He found that the rains had torn down the mud-pillars of the gateway, and the heavy wooden gate that had guarded his life hung drunkenly from one hinge. There was grass three inches high in the court-yard; Pir Khan's lodge was empty, and the sodden thatch sagged between the beams. A gray squirrel was in possession of the veranda, as if the house had been untenanted for thirty years instead of three days. Ameera's mother had removed everything except some mildewed matting. The *tick-tick* of the little scorpions as they hurried across the floor was the only sound in the house. Ameera's room and the other one where Tota had lived were heavy with mildew, and the narrow staircase leading to the roof was streaked and stained with rain-borne mud. Holden saw all these things, and came out again to meet in the road Durga Dass, his landlord,—portly, affable, clothed in white muslin, and driving a C-spring buggy. He was overlooking his property, to see how the roofs withstood the stress of the first rains.

"I have heard," said he, "you will not take this place any more, sahib?"

"What are you going to do with it?"

"Perhaps I shall let it again."

"Then I will keep it on while I am away."

Durga Dass was silent for some time. "You shall not take it on, sahib," he said. "When I was a young man I also— But to-day I am a member of the municipality. Ho! ho! No. When the birds have gone, what need to keep the nest? I will have it pulled down; the timber will sell for something always. It shall be pulled down, and the municipality shall make a road across, as they desire, from the burning-ghat to the city wall. So that no man may say where this house stood."

THE CONTEMPORARY LYRIC

The period covered by the lyrics in the present section extends roughly from 1890 to the present day. The verse of these years is not infrequently called "the new poetry" as representing a conscious break with the traditions of the Victorian Age just passing. There had been some opposition to these traditions earlier, but it was not until the close of the century that the full reaction got under way. The objections which the poets of the eighteen-nineties raised to the practice of the preceding period were threefold. They felt that poetry, both lyric and narrative, was too much absorbed with literary themes not sufficiently close to real life; that it was hampered by a deadening sense of propriety and moral restraint; and that it had fallen into a conventional poetic diction not like the speech of the people. The reaction against these tendencies, recalling similar revolts in the past, showed itself in various ways.

In general it may be described as a spirit of insurgency characteristic of the time, a spirit that finds its counterpart in the sculpture of Rodin, the music of Strauss, and the painting of the "moderns." In English literature perhaps the earliest form which it took was a denial of the connection, formerly assumed, between literature and ethics,—the doctrine of Oscar Wilde that art is worthy to be cultivated for its own sake without reference to morals. Opposition to the Victorian reticence and instinctive shrinking from the unpleasant in life became in some quarters a desire frankly to shock. There were those who tasted life at the dregs or assumed the air of having done so. In some this attitude was carried to a point where it became plainly decadent and is reflected in their verse.

The revolt against Victorian convention soon became more general. The nonconformist, the revolutionist, the reformer, and even the poseur are not always easily distinguished, but they have one quality in common. They are all sympathetic to change, and tolerant of novelty. It is a fundamental assumption in contemporary poetry that each man has the right to complete self-development, the right to be different. Ours is an age of experiment: imagist poetry and free verse are merely evidences of the desire to seek new effects by new methods. Under the circumstances we must expect to find variety and complexity as characteristics of the period.

It would be impossible in this brief compass to pursue the separate movements that have a place in these recent decades of English poetry. Important among them would be the Celtic Renaissance, of which William Butler Yeats is the outstanding figure. The "poets of empire," of whom Rudyard Kipling heads the list, and the poets of the war, who have given us such splendid pieces as "In Flanders Fields," "The Spires of Oxford," and "The Soldier," all printed below, illustrate important sources of inspiration. One tendency of great importance must be mentioned,—the

return to the simplicity of everyday life and the idiom of everyday speech. The truth of Synge's assertion that "when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life, and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose its strength of exaltation, in the way that men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost happiness in building shops" has been fully recognized. A. E. Housman's little collection of verses, *A Shropshire Lad,* admirably illustrates the power inherent in simple themes. Fortunately its influence has been great, for its simplicity, directness, and sincerity are the qualities of contemporary lyric poetry, as of all art, at its best.

Of recent years a further poetic revolt has been in progress in the verse of a radical wing whose attitude towards poetry is part of a larger opposition to the old order of things in general. Its views are very stimulating. It insists on hard, sharp effects, and asserts a preference for short simple words; it is characterized by great freedom of rhythm and phrasing, at times by perversity of mood and theme tending toward disillusionment, pessimism, and even the nasty, and seeks to create its effects without interpreting the emotion for the reader. Some excellent poetry guarantees the sincerity of the movement.

RICHARD ALDINGTON (1892–)

THE POPLAR

Why do you always stand there shivering
Between the white stream and the road?

The people pass through the dust
On bicycles, in carts, in motor-cars;
The wagoners go by at dawn;
The lovers walk on the grass path at night.

Stir from your roots—walk, poplar!
You are more beautiful than they are.

I know that the white wind loves you,
Is always kissing you and turning up
The white lining of your green petticoat.
The sky darts through you like blue rain,
And the gray rain drips on your flanks
And loves you.
And I have seen the moon
Slip his silver penny into your pocket
As you straightened your hair;
And the white mist curling and hesitating
Like a bashful lover about your knees.
I know you, poplar;
I have watched you since I was ten.
But if you had a little real love,
A little strength,
You would leave your nonchalant idle lovers
And go walking down the white road
Behind the wagoners.

There are beautiful beeches down beyond the hill.
Will you always stand there shivering?

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM (1824–1889)

FOUR DUCKS ON A POND

Four ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing;
What a little thing
To remember for years—
To remember with tears!

F. W. BOURDILLON (1852–)

LIGHT

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done.

ROBERT BRIDGES (1844–)

A PASSER-BY

Whither, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
That fearest nor sea rising nor sky clouding,
Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest?
Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest,
When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling?

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air:
I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;
Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capp'd, grandest
Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair
Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhail'd and nameless,
I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
Thy port assured in a happier land than mine.
But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

SO SWEET LOVE SEEMED

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
When first we kissed beside the thorn,
So strangely sweet, it was not strange
We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told—
That love will change in growing old;
Though day by day is naught to see,
So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
Quite to forget what once he was,
Nor even in fancy to recall
The pleasure that was all for all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
So deep in summer floods is drowned,
I wonder, bathed in joy complete,
How love so young could be so sweet.

RUPERT BROOKE (1887–1915)

THE GREAT LOVER

I have been so great a lover: filled my days
So proudly with the splendor of Love's praise,
The pain, the calm, and the astonishment,
Desire illimitable, and still content,
And all dear names men use, to cheat despair,
For the perplexed and viewless streams that bear
Our hearts at random down the dark of life.
Now, ere the unthinking silence on that strife
Steals down, I would cheat drowsy Death so far,
My night shall be remembered for a star
That outshone all the suns of all men's days.
Shall I not crown them with immortal praise
Whom I have loved, who have given me, dared with me
High secrets, and in darkness knelt to see
The inenarrable godhead of delight?
Love is a flame;—we have beaconed the world's night.
A city:—and we have built it, these and I.
An emperor:—we have taught the world to die.
So, for their sakes I loved, ere I go hence,
And the high cause of Love's magnificence,
And to keep loyalties young, I'll write those names
Golden for ever, eagles, crying flames,
And set them as a banner, that man may know,
To dare the generations, burn, and blow
Out on the winds of Time, shining and streaming. . . .

These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
And radiant raindrops couching in cool flowers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
The good smell of old clothes; and other such—
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .

Dear names,
And thousand other throng to me! Royal flames;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam

That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold
Graveness of iron; moist black earthen mold;
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass;—
All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath,
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramented covenant to the dust.
—Oh, never a doubt but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends, now strangers. . . .
But the best I've known,
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from brains
Of living men, and dies.
Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again
This one last gift I give: that after men
Shall know, and later lovers, far-removed,
Praise you, "All these were lovely"; say, "He loved."

THE SOLDIER

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is for ever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

THE DEAD

These hearts were woven of human joys and cares,
Washed marvelously with sorrow, swift to mirth.
The years had given them kindness. Dawn was theirs,
And sunset, and the colors of the earth.
These had seen movement, and heard music; known
Slumber and waking; loved; gone proudly friended;
Felt the quick stir of wonder; sat alone;
Touched flowers and furs and cheeks. All this is ended.

There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter
And lit by the rich skies, all day. And after,
Frost, with a gesture, stays the waves that dance
And wandering loveliness. He leaves a white

Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace, under the night.

THE HILL

Breathless, we flung us on the windy hill,
Laughed in the sun, and kissed the lovely grass.
You said, "Through glory and ecstasy we pass;
Wind, sun, and earth remain, the birds sing still,
When we are old, are old. . . ." "And when we die
All's over that is ours; and life burns on
Through other lovers, other lips," said I,
—"Heart of my heart, our heaven is now, is won!"

"We are Earth's best, that learnt her lesson here.
Life is our cry. We have kept the faith!" we said;
"We shall go down with unreluctant tread
Rose-crowned into the darkness!" . . . Proud we were,
And laughed, that had such brave true things to say.
—And then you suddenly cried, and turned away.

T. E. BROWN (1830–1897)

MY GARDEN

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fringed pool,
Ferned grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.

VESPERS

O blackbird, what a boy you are!
How you do go it!
Blowing your bugle to that one sweet star—
How you do blow it!
And does she hear you, blackbird boy, so far?
Or is it wasted breath?
"Good Lord! she is so bright
To-night!"
The blackbird saith.

WILLIAM (JOHNSON) CORY (1823–1892)

HERACLITUS

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept, as I remembered, how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of gray ashes, long long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

WILLIAM H. DAVIES (1870–)

THE RAIN

I hear leaves drinking Rain;
  I hear rich leaves on top
Giving the poor beneath
  Drop after drop;
'Tis a sweet noise to hear
These green leaves drinking near.

And when the Sun comes out,
After this Rain shall stop,
A wondrous Light will fill
Each dark, round drop;
I hope the Sun shines bright:
'Twill be a lovely sight.

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like stars at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

WALTER DE LA MARE (1873-)

THE LISTENERS

"Is there anybody there?" said the Traveler,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest's ferny floor:
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveler's head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
"Is there anybody there?" he said.
But no one descended to the Traveler;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his gray eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Hearkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveler's call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,
While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
'Neath the starred and leafy sky;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
Louder, and lifted his head:—
"Tell them I came, and no one answered,
That I kept my word," he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the still house
From the one man left awake:
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
When the plunging hoofs were gone.

NOD

Softly along the road of evening,
In a twilight dim with rose,
Wrinkled with age, and drenched with dew,
Old Nod, the shepherd, goes.

His drowsy flock streams on before him,
Their fleeces charged with gold,
To where the sun's last beam leans low
On Nod the shepherd's fold.

The hedge is quick and green with briar,
From their sand the conies creep;
And all the birds that fly in heaven
Flock singing home to sleep.

His lambs outnumber a noon's roses,
Yet, when night's shadows fall,
His blind old sheep-dog, Slumber-soon,
Misses not one of all.

His are the quiet steeps of dreamland,
The waters of no-more-pain,
His ram's bell rings 'neath an arch of stars,
"Rest, rest, and rest again."

(HENRY) AUSTIN DOBSON
(1840–1921)

IN AFTER DAYS

Rondeau

In after days when grasses high
O'er-top the stone where I shall lie,
Though ill or well the world adjust
My slender claim to honored dust,
I shall not question or reply.

I shall not see the morning sky;
I shall not hear the night-wind sigh;
I shall be mute, as all men must
In after days!

But yet, now living, fain were I
That some one then should testify,
Saying—"He held his pen in trust
To Art, not serving shame or lust."
Will none?—Then let my memory die
In after days!

A KISS

Rose kissed me to-day.
Will she kiss me to-morrow?
Let it be as it may,
Rose kissed me to-day.
But the pleasure gives way
To a savor of sorrow;—
Rose kissed me to-day,—
Will she kiss me to-morrow?

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL

He lived in that past Georgian day,
When men were less inclined to say
That "Time is Gold," and overlay
With toil their pleasure;
He held some land, and dwelt thereon,—
Where, I forget,—the house is gone;
His Christian name, I think, was John,—
His surname, Leisure.

Reynolds has painted him,—a face
Filled with a fine, old-fashioned grace,
Fresh-colored, frank, with ne'er a trace
Of trouble shaded;
The eyes are blue, the hair is drest
In plainest way,—one hand is prest
Deep in a flapped canary vest,
With buds brocaded.

He wears a brown old Brunswick coat,
With silver buttons,—round his throat,
A soft cravat;—in all you note
An elder fashion,—
A strangeness, which, to us who shine
On shapely hats,—whose coats combine
All harmonies of hue and line,—
Inspires compassion.

He lived so long ago, you see!
Men were untraveled then, but we,
Like Ariel, post o'er land and sea
With careless parting;
He found it quite enough for him
To smoke his pipe in "garden trim,"
And watch, about the fish tank's brim,
The swallows darting.

He liked the well-wheel's creaking tongue,—
He liked the thrush that stopped and sung,—
He liked the drone of flies among
His netted peaches;
He liked to watch the sunlight fall
Athwart his ivied orchard wall;
Or pause to catch the cuckoo's call
Beyond the beeches.

His were the times of Paint and Patch,
And yet no Ranelagh could match
The sober doves that round his thatch
Spread tails and sidled;
He liked their ruffling, puffed content,—
For him their drowsy wheelings meant
More than a Mall of Beaux that bent,
Or Belles that bridled.

Not that, in truth, when life began,
He shunned the flutter of the fan;
He too had maybe "pinked his man"
In Beauty's quarrel;
But now his "fervent youth" had flown
Where lost things go; and he was grown
As staid and slow-paced as his own
Old hunter, Sorrel.

Yet still he loved the chase, and held
That no composer's score excelled
The merry horn, when Sweetlip swelled
Its jovial riot;
But most his measured words of praise
Caressed the angler's easy ways,—
His idly meditative days,—
His rustic diet.

Not that his "meditating" rose
Beyond a sunny summer doze;
He never troubled his repose
With fruitless prying;
But held, as law for high and low,
What God withholds no man can know,
And smiled away inquiry so,
Without replying.

We read—alas, how much we read!
The jumbled strifes of creed and creed
With endless controversies feed
Our groaning tables;
His books—and they sufficed him—were
Cotton's "Montaigne," "The Grave" of Blair,
A "Walton"—much the worse for wear—
And "Æsop's Fables."

One more,—"The Bible." Not that he
Had searched its page as deep as we;
No sophistries could make him see
Its slender credit;
It may be that he could not count
The sires and sons to Jesse's fount,—
He liked the "Sermon on the Mount,"—
And more, he read it.

Once he had loved, but failed to wed,
A red-cheeked lass who long was dead;
His ways were far too slow, he said,
To quite forget her;
And still when time had turned him gray,
The earliest hawthorne buds in May
Would find his lingering feet astray,
Where first he met her.

"In Cœlo Quies" heads the stone
On Leisure's grave,—now little known,
A tangle of wild-rose has grown
So think across it;
The "Benefactions" still declare
He left the clerk an elbow-chair,
And "12 Pence Yearly to Prepare
A Christmas Posset."

Lie softly, Leisure! Doubtless you,
With too serene a conscience drew
Your easy breath, and slumbered through
The gravest issue;
But we, to whom our age allows
Scarce space to wipe our weary brows,
Look down upon your narrow house,
Old friend, and miss you!

ERNEST DOWSON (1867–1900)

YOU WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD ME

Ah, dans ces mornes séjours
Les jamais sont les toujours
—Paul Verlaine.

You would have understood me, had you waited;
I could have loved you, dear! as well as he:
Had we not been impatient, dear! and fated
Always to disagree.

What is the use of speech? Silence were fitter:
Lest we should still be wishing things unsaid.
Though all the words we ever spake were bitter,
Shall I reproach you dead?

Nay, let this earth, your portion, likewise cover
All the old anger, setting us apart:
Always, in all, in truth was I your lover;
Always, I held your heart.

I have met other women who were tender,
As you were cold, dear! with a grace as rare.
Think you, I turned to them, or made surrender,
I who had found you fair?

Had we been patient, dear! ah, had you waited,
I had fought death for you, better than he:
But from the very first, dear! we were fated
Always to disagree.

Late, late, I come to you, now death discloses
Love that in life was not to be our part:
On your low lying mound between the roses,
Sadly I cast my heart.

I would not waken you: nay! this is fitter;
Death and the darkness give you unto me;
Here we who loved so, were so cold and bitter,
Hardly can disagree.

THEY ARE NOT LONG

Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate:
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

They are not long, the days of wine and roses:
Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
Within a dream.

JOHN DRINKWATER (1882–)

THE MIDLANDS

Black in the summer night my Cotswold hill
Aslant my window sleeps, beneath a sky
Deep as the bedded violets that fill
March woods with dusky passion. As I lie
Abed between cool walls I watch the host
Of the slow stars lit over Gloucester plain,

And drowsily the habit of these most
Beloved of English lands moves in my brain,
While silence holds dominion of the dark,
Save when the foxes from the spinneys bark.

I see the valleys in their morning mist
Wreathed under limpid hills in moving light,
Happy with many a yeoman melodist;
I see the little roads of twinkling white
Busy with fieldward teams and market gear
Of rosy men, cloth-gaitered, who can tell
The many-minded changes of the year,
Who know why crops and kine fare ill or well;
I see the sun persuade the mist away,
Till town and stead are shining to the day.

I see the wagons move along the rows
Of ripe and summer-breathing clover-flower,
I see the lissom husbandman who knows
Deep in his heart the beauty of his power,
As, lithely pitched, the full-heaped fork bids on
The harvest home. I hear the rickyard fill
With gossip as in generations gone,
While wagon follows wagon from the hill.
I think how, when our seasons all are sealed,
Shall come the unchanging harvest from the field.

I see the barns and comely manors planned
By men who somehow moved in comely thought,
Who, with a simple shippon to their hand,
As men upon some godlike business wrought;
I see the little cottages that keep
Their beauty still where since Plantagenet
Have come the shepherds happily to sleep,
Finding the loaves and cups of cider set;
I see the twisted shepherds, brown and old,
Driving at dusk their glimmering sheep to fold.

And not the valleys that upon the sun
Broke from their opal veils, are veiled again,
And the last light upon the wolds is done,
And silence falls on flocks and fields and men;
And black upon the night I watch my hill,
And the stars shine, and there an owly wing
Brushes the night, and all again is still,
And, from this land of worship that I sing,
I turn to sleep, content that from my sires
I draw the blood of England's midmost shires.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER
(1884–1915)

THE OLD SHIPS

I have seen old ships sail like swans asleep
Beyond the village which men still call Tyre,
With laden age o'ercargoed, dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire;
And all those ships were certainly so old
Who knows how oft with squat and noisy gun,

Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell-raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit and corpses up the hold.
But now through friendly seas they softly run,
Painted the mid-sea blue or the shore-sea green,
Still patterned with the vine and grapes in gold.

But I have seen,
Pointing her shapely shadows from the dawn
An image tumbled on a rose-swept bay,
A drowsy ship of some yet older day;
And, wonder's breath indrawn,
Thought I—who knows—who knows—but in that same
(Fished up beyond Ææa, patched up new
—Stern painted brighter blue—)
That talkative, bald-headed seaman came
(Twelve patient comrades sweating at the oar)
From Troy's doom-crimson shore,
And with great lies about his wooden horse
Set the crew laughing, and forgot his course.

It was so old a ship—who knows—who knows?
—And yet so beautiful, I watched in vain
To see the mast burst open with a rose,
And the whole deck put on its leaves again.

THOMAS HARDY (1840–)

FOR LIFE I HAD NEVER CARED GREATLY

For Life I had never cared greatly,
As worth a man's while;
Peradventures unsought,
Peradventures that finished in nought,
Had kept me from youth and through manhood till lately
Unwon by its style.

In earliest years—why I know not—
I viewed it askance;
Conditions of doubt,
Conditions that leaked slowly out,
May haply have bent me to stand and to show not
Much zest for its dance.

With symphonies soft and sweet color
It courted me then,
Till evasions seemed wrong,
Till evasions gave in to its song,
And I warmed, until living aloofly loomed duller
Than life among men.

Anew I found nought to set eyes on,
When, lifting its hand,
It uncloaked a star,
Uncloaked it from fog-damps afar,
And showed its beams burning from pole to horizon
As bright as a brand.

And so, the rough highway forgetting,
I pace hill and dale
Regarding the sky,
Regarding the vision on high,
And thus re-illumed have no humor for letting
My pilgrimage fail.

IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS" [1]

I

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk

[1] *Jer.* li. 20.

With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

"AH, ARE YOU DIGGING ON MY GRAVE?"

"Ah, are you digging on my grave
My loved one?—planting rue?"
—"No; yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred
'It cannot hurt her now,' he said,
'That I should not be true.'"

"Then who is digging on my grave?
My nearest dearest kin?"
—"Ah, no: they sit and think, 'What use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death's gin.'"

"But some one digs upon my grave?
My enemy?—prodding sly?"
—"Nay: when she heard you had passed the Gate
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie."

"Then who is digging on my grave?
Say— since I have not guessed!"
—"O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog, who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest?"

"Ah, yes! *You* dig upon my grave . . .
Why flashed it not on me
That one true heart was left behind!
What feeling do we ever find
To equal among human kind
A dog's fidelity!"

"Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.
I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting-place."

TO LIZBIE BROWNE

I

Dear Lizbie Browne,
Where are you now?
In sun, in rain?—
Or is your brow
Past joy, past pain,
Dear Lizbie Browne?

II

Sweet Lizbie Browne
How you could smile,
How you could sing!—
How archly wile
In glance-giving,
Sweet Lizbie Browne!

III

And, Lizbie Browne,
Who else had hair
Bay-red as yours,
Or flesh so fair
Bred out of doors,
Sweet Lizbie Browne?

IV

When, Lizbie Browne,
You had just begun
To be endeared
By stealth to one,
You disappeared
My Lizbie Browne!

V

Ay, Lizbie Browne,
So swift your life,
And mine so slow,
You were a wife
Ere I could show
Love, Lizbie Browne.

VI

Still, Lizbie Browne,
You won, they said,
The best of men
When you were wed. . . .
Where went you then,
O Lizbie Browne?

VII

Dear Lizbie Browne,
I should have thought,
"Girls ripen fast,"
And coaxed and caught
You ere you passed,
Dear Lizbie Browne!

VIII

But, Lizbie Browne,
I let you slip;
Shaped not a sign;
Touched never your lip
With lip of mine,
Lost Lizbie Browne!

IX

So, Lizbie Browne,
When on a day
Men speak of me
As not, you'll say,
"And who was he?"—
Yes, Lizbie Browne!

AT CASTERBRIDGE FAIR

I

The Ballad-Singer

Sing, Ballad-singer, raise a hearty tune;
Make me forget that there was ever a one
I walked with in the meek light of the moon
When the day's work was done.

Rhyme, Ballad-rhymer, start a country song;
Make me forget that she whom I loved well
Swore she would love me dearly, love me long,
Then—what I cannot tell!

Sing, Ballad-singer, from your little book;
Make me forget those heartbreaks, achings, fears;
Make me forget her name, her sweet sweet look—
Make me forget her tears.

II

Former Beauties

These market-dames, mid-aged with lips thin-drawn,
And tissues sere,
Are they the ones we loved in years agone,
And courted here?

Are these the muslined pink young things to whom
We vowed and swore
In nooks on summer Sundays by the Froom,
Or Budmouth shore?

Do they remember those gay tunes we trod
Clasped on the green;
Aye; trod till moonlight set on the beaten sod
A satin sheen?

They must forget, forget! They cannot know
What once they were,
Or memory would transfigure them, and show
Them always fair.

IV

THE MARKET-GIRL

Nobody took any notice of her as she stood on the causey kerb,
All eager to sell her honey and apples and bunches of garden herb;
And if she had offered to give her wares and herself with them too that day,
I doubt if a soul would have cared to take a bargain so choice away.

But chancing to trace her sunburnt grace that morning as I passed nigh,
I went and I said "Poor maidy dear!—and will none of the people buy?"
And so it began; and soon we knew what the end of it all must be,
And I found that though no others had bid, a prize had been won by me.

V

THE INQUIRY

And are ye one of Hermitage—
Of Hermitage, by Ivel Road,
And do ye know, in Hermitage
A thatch-roofed house where sengreens grow?

And does John Waywood live there still—
He of the name that there abode
When father hurdled on the hill
Some fifteen years ago?

Does he now speak o' Patty Beech,
The Patty Beech he used to—see
Or ask at all if Patty Beech
Is known or heard of out this way?
—Ask ever if she's living yet,
And where her present home may be,
And how she bears life's fag and fret
After so long a day?

In years agone at Hermitage
This faded face was counted fair,
None fairer; and at Hermitage
We swore to wed when he should thrive.
But never a chance had he or I,
And waiting made his wish outwear,
And Time, that dooms man's love to die,
Preserves a maid's alive.

VI

A WIFE WAITS

Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,
Where the tall liquor-cups foam;
I on the pavement up here by the Bow,[1]
Wait, wait, to steady him home.

Will and his partner are treading a tune,
Loving companions they be;
Willy, before we were married in June,
Said he loved no one but me;

Said he would let his old pleasures all go
Ever to live with his Dear.
Will's at the dance in the Club-room below,
Shivering I wait for him here.

[1] "The old name for the curved corner by the cross-streets in the middle of Casterbridge." (Mr. Hardy's note.)

VII

After the Fair

The singers are gone from the Corn-
market-place
With their broadsheets of rhymes,
The street rings no longer in treble and
bass
With their skits on the times,
And the Cross, lately thronged, is a dim
naked space
That but echoes the stammering
chimes.

From Clock-corner steps, as each quarter
ding-dongs,
Away the folk roam
By the "Hart" and Grey's Bridge into
byways and "drongs," [1]
Or across the ridged loam;
The younger ones shrilling the lately
heard songs,
The old saying, "Would we were
home."

The shy-seeming maiden so mute in the
fair
Now rattles and talks,
And that one who looked the most swag-
gering there
Grows sad as she walks,
And she who seemed eaten by cankering
care
In statuesque sturdiness stalks.

And midnight clears High Street of all
but the ghosts
Of its buried burghees,
From the latest far back to those old
Roman hosts
Whose remains one yet sees,
Who loved, laughed, and fought, hailed
their friends, drank their toasts
At their meeting-times here, just as
these!

[1] lanes

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY
(1849–1903)

Romance

"Talk of pluck!" pursued the Sailor,
Set at euchre on his elbow,
"I was on the wharf at Charleston,
Just ashore from off the runner.

"It was gray and dirty weather,
And I heard a drum go rolling,
Rub-a-dubbing in the distance,
Awful dour-like and defiant.

"In and out among the cotton,
Mud, and chains, and stores, and
anchors,
Tramped a squad of battered scare-
crows—
Poor old Dixie's bottom dollar!

"Some had shoes, but all had rifles,
Them that wasn't bald was beardless,
And the drum was rolling *Dixie,*
And they stepped to it like men, sir!

"Rags and tatters, belts and bayonets,
On they swung, the drum a-rolling,
Mum and sour. It looked like fighting,
And they meant it too, by thunder!"

Unconquerable

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,

And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

SO LET ME HENCE

So let me hence as one
Whose part in the world has been dreamed out and done:
One that hath fairly earned and spent
In pride of heart and jubilance of blood
Such wages, be they counted bad or good,
As Time, the old taskmaster, was moved to pay;
And, having warred and suffered, and passed on
Those gifts the Arbiters preferred and gave,
Fare, grateful and content,
Down the dim way
Whereby races innumerable have gone,
Into the silent universe of the grave.

Grateful for what hath been—
For what my hand hath done, mine eyes have seen,
My heart been privileged to know;
With all my lips in love have brought
To lips that yearned in love to them, and wrought
In the way of wrath, and pity, and sport, and song:

Content, this miracle of being alive
Dwindling, that I, thrice weary of worst and best,
May shed my duds, and go,
From right and wrong,
And, ceasing to regret, and long, and strive,
Accept the past, and be forever at rest.

RALPH HODGSON (1872–)

TIME, YOU OLD GIPSY MAN[1]

Time, you old gipsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

All things I'll give you
Will you be my guest,
Bells for your jennet
Of silver the best,
Goldsmiths shall beat you
A great golden ring,
Peacocks shall bow to you,
Little boys sing,
Oh, and sweet girls will
Festoon you with may,
Time, you old gipsy,
Why hasten away?

Last week in Babylon,
Last night in Rome,
Morning, and in the crush
Under Paul's dome;
Under Paul's dial
You tighten your rein—
Only a moment,
And off once again;
Off to some city
Now blind in the womb,
Off to another
Ere that's in the tomb.

Time, you old gipsy man,
Will you not stay,
Put up your caravan
Just for one day?

STUPIDITY STREET

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet

[1] The following four poems are reprinted by permission from *Poems* by Ralph Hodgson, copyright 1917 by The Macmillan Company.

Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity Street.

I saw in vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat;
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity Street.

THE BULL

See an old unhappy bull,
Sick in soul and body both,
Slouching in the undergrowth
Of the forest beautiful,
Banished from the herd he led,
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

Cranes and gaudy parrots go
Up and down the burning sky;
Tree-top cats purr drowsily
In the dim-day green below;
And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,
All disputing, go and come;

And things abominable sit
Picking offal buck or swine,
On the mess and over it
Burnished flies and beetles shine,
And spiders big as bladders lie
Under hemlocks ten foot high;

And a dotted serpent curled
Round and round and round a tree,
Yellowing its greenery,
Keeps a watch on all the world,
All the world and this old bull
In the forest beautiful.

Bravely by his fall he came:
One he led, a bull of blood
Newly come to lustihood,
Fought and put his prince to shame,
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head
Tameless even while it bled.

There they left him, every one,
Left him there without a lick,
Left him for the birds to pick,
Left him there for carrion,
Vilely from their bosom cast
Wisdom, worth and love at last.

When the lion left his lair
And roared his beauty through the hills,
And the vultures pecked their quills
And flew into the middle air,
Then this prince no more to reign
Came to life and lived again.

He snuffed the herd in far retreat,
He saw the blood upon the ground,
And snuffed the burning airs around
Still with beevish odors sweet,
While the blood ran down his head
And his mouth ran slaver red.

Pity him, this fallen chief,
All his splendor, all his strength,
All his body's breadth and length
Dwindled down with shame and grief,
Half the bull he was before,
Bones and leather, nothing more.

See him standing dewlap-deep
In the rushes at the lake,
Surly, stupid, half asleep,
Waiting for his heart to break
And the birds to join the flies
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes;

Standing with his head hung down
In a stupor, dreaming things:
Green savannas, jungles brown,
Battlefields and bellowings,
Bulls undone and lions dead
And vultures flapping overhead.

Dreaming things: of days he spent
With his mother gaunt and lean

In the valley warm and green,
Full of baby wonderment,
Blinking out of silly eyes
At a hundred mysteries;

Dreaming over once again
How he wandered with a throng
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,
Wandered on from plain to plain,
Up the hill and down the dale,
Always at his mother's tail;

How he lagged behind the herd,
Lagged and tottered, weak of limb,
And she turned and ran to him
Blaring at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming maybe of a day
When her drained and drying paps
Turned him to the sweets and saps,
Richer fountains by the way,
And she left the bull she bore
And he looked to her no more;

And his little frame grew stout,
And his little legs grew strong,
And the way was not so long;
And his little horns came out,
And he played at butting trees
And boulder-stones and tortoises,

Joined a game of knobby skulls
With the youngsters of his year,
All the other little bulls,
Learning both to bruise and bear,
Learning how to stand a shock
Like a little bull of rock.

Dreaming of a day less dim,
Dreaming of a time less far,
When the faint but certain star
Of destiny burned clear for him,
And a fierce and wild unrest
Broke the quiet of his breast,

And the gristles of his youth
Hardened in his comely pow,
And he came to fighting growth,
Beat his bull and won his cow,
And flew his tail and trampled off
Past the tallest, vain enough,

And curved about in splendor full
And curved again and snuffed the airs
As who should say Come out who dares!
And all beheld a bull, a Bull,
And knew that here was surely one
That backed for no bull, fearing none.

And the leader of the herd
Looked and saw, and beat the ground,
And shook the forest with his sound,
Bellowed at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,
Surely dreaming of the hour
When he came to sultan power,
And they owned him master-horn,
Chiefest bull of all among
Bulls and cows a thousand strong;

And in all the tramping herd
Not a bull that barred his way,
Not a cow that said him nay,
Not a bull or cow that erred
In the furnace of his look
Dared a second, worse rebuke;

Not in all the forest wide,
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen,
Not another dared him then,
Dared him and again defied;
Not a sovereign buck or boar
Came a second time for more;

Not a serpent that survived
Once the terrors of his hoof
Risked a second time reproof,
Came a second time and lived,
Not a serpent in its skin
Came again for discipline;

Not a leopard bright as flame,
Flashing fingerhooks of steel,
That a wooden tree might feel,
Met his fury once and came
For a second reprimand,
Not a leopard in the land;

Not a lion of them all,
Not a lion of the hills,
Hero of a thousand kills,
Dared a second fight and fall,
Dared that ram terrific twice,
Paid a second time the price.

Pity him, this dupe of dream,
Leader of the herd again
Only in his daft old brain,
Once again the bull supreme
And bull enough to bear the part
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake;
Even now the swarm of flies
Blackening his bloodshot eyes
Bursts and blusters round the lake,
Scattered from the feast half-fed,
By great shadows overhead;

And the dreamer turns away
From his visionary herds
And his splendid yesterday,
Turns to meet the loathly birds
Flocking round him from the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.

THE GIPSY GIRL

"Come, try your skill, kind gentlemen,
A penny for three tries!"
Some threw and lost, some threw and won
A ten-a-penny prize.

She was a tawny gipsy girl,
A girl of twenty years,
I liked her for the lumps of gold
That jingled from her ears;
I liked the flaring yellow scarf
Bound loose about her throat,
I liked her showy purple gown
And flashy velvet coat.

A man came up, too loose of tongue,
And said no good to her;
She did not blush as Saxons do,
Or turn upon the cur;

She fawned and whined "Sweet gentleman,
A penny for three tries!"
—But oh, the den of wild things in
The darkness of her eyes!

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859–)

LOVELIEST OF TREES, THE CHERRY NOW

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

REVEILLE

Wake: the silver dusk returning
Up the beach of darkness brims,
And the ship of sunrise burning
Strands upon the eastern rims.

Wake: the vaulted shadow shatters,
Trampled to the floor is spanned,

And the tent of night in tatters
  Straws the sky-pavilioned land.

Up, lad, up, 't is late for lying:
  Hear the drums of morning play;
Hark, the empty highways crying
  "Who'll beyond the hills away?"

Towns and countries woo together,
  Forelands beacon, belfries call;
Never lad that trod on leather
  Lived to feast his heart with all.

Up, lad: thews that lie and cumber
  Sunlit pallets never thrive;
Morns abed and daylight slumber
  Were not meant for man alive.

Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
  Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad: when the journey's over
  There'll be time enough to sleep.

GOOD-BY, YOUNG MAN, GOOD-BY

Oh see how thick the goldcup flowers
  Are lying in field and lane,
With dandelions to tell the hours
  That never are told again.
Oh may I squire you round the meads
  And pick you posies gay?
—'T will do no harm to take my arm.
  "You may, young man, you may."

Ah, spring was sent for lass and lad,
  'T is now the blood runs gold,
And man and maid had best be glad
  Before the world is old.
What flowers today may flower tomorrow,
  But never as good as new.
—Suppose I wound my arm right round—
  " 'T is true, young man, 't is true."

Some lads there are, 't is shame to say,
  That only court to thieve,
And once they bear the bloom away
  'T is little enough they leave.
Then keep your heart for men like me
  And safe from trustless chaps.
My love is true and all for you.
  "Perhaps, young man, perhaps."

Oh, look in my eyes then, can you doubt?
  —Why, 't is a mile from town.
How green the grass is all about!
  We might as well sit down.
—Ah, life, what is it but a flower?
  Why must true lovers sigh?
Be kind, have pity, my own, my pretty,—
  "Good-by, young man, good-by."

WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY

When I was one-and-twenty
  I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
  But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies
  But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
  No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
  I heard him say again,
"The heart out of the bosom
  Was never given in vain;
" 'T is paid with sighs a plenty
  And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty,
  And oh, 't is true, 't is true.

THE MERRY GUIDE[1]

Once in the wind of morning
  I ranged the thymy wold;
The world-wide air was azure
  And all the brooks ran gold.

[1] Hermes, who was appointed by the gods to conduct the souls of the dead from the upper to the lower world.

There through the dews beside me
Behold a youth that trod,
With feathered cap on forehead,
And poised a golden rod.

With mien to match the morning
And gay delightful guise
And friendly brows and laughter
He looked me in the eyes.

Oh whence, I asked, and whither?
He smiled and would not say,
And looked at me and beckoned
And laughed and led the way.

And with kind looks and laughter
And nought to say beside
We two went on together,
I and my happy guide.

Across the glittering pastures
And empty upland still
And solitude of shepherds
High in the folded hill,

By hanging woods and hamlets
That gaze through orchards down
On many a windmill turning
And far-discovered town,

With gay regards of promise
And sure unslackened stride
And smiles and nothing spoken
Led on my merry guide.

By blowing realms of woodland
With sunstruck vanes afield
And cloud-led shadows sailing
About the windy weald,

By valley-guarded granges
And silver waters wide,
Content at heart I followed
With my delightful guide.

And like the cloudy shadows
Across the country blown
We two fare on for ever,
But not we two alone.

With the great gale we journey
That breathes from gardens thinned
Borne in the drift of blossoms
Whose petals throng the wind;

Buoyed on the heaven-heard whisper
Of dancing leaflets whirled
From all the woods that autumn
Bereaves in all the world.

And midst the fluttering legion
Of all that ever died
I follow, and before us
Goes the delightful guide,

With lips that brim with laughter
But never once respond,
And feet that fly on feathers,
And serpent-circled wand.

WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

TERENCE, THIS IS STUPID STUFF

"Terence, this is stupid stuff:
You eat your victuals fast enough;
There can't be much amiss, 't is clear,
To see the rate you drink your beer
But oh, good Lord, the verse you make,
It gives a chap the belly-ache.
The cow, the old cow, she is dead;
It sleeps well, the horned head:

We poor lads, 't is our turn now
To hear such tunes as killed the cow.
Pretty friendship 't is to rhyme
Your friends to death before their time
Moping melancholy mad:
Come, pipe a tune to dance to, lad."

Why, if 't is dancing you would be,
There's brisker pipes than poetry.
Say, for what were hop-yards meant,
Or why was Burton built on Trent?
Oh many a peer of England brews
Livelier liquor than the Muse,
And malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.
Ale, man, ale's the stuff to drink
For fellows whom it hurts to think:
Look into the pewter pot
To see the world as the world's not.
And faith, 't is pleasant till 't is past:
The mischief is that 't will not last.
Oh I have been to Ludlow fair
And left my necktie God knows where,
And carried half way home, or near,
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer:
Then the world seemed none so bad,
And I myself a sterling lad;
And down in lovely muck I've lain,
Happy till I woke again.
Then I saw the morning sky:
Heigho, the tale was all a lie;
The world, it was the old world yet,
I was I, my things were wet,
And nothing now remained to do
But begin the game anew.

Therefore, since the world has still
Much good, but much less good than ill,
And while the sun and moon endure
Luck's a chance, but trouble's sure,
I'd face it as a wise man would,
And train for ill and not for good.
'T is true, the stuff I bring for sale
Is not so brisk a brew as ale:
Out of a stem that scored the hand
I wrung it in a weary land.
But take it: if the smack is sour,
The better for the embittered hour;
It should do good to heart and head
When your soul is in my soul's stead;
And I will friend you, if I may,
In the dark and cloudy day.

There was a king reigned in the East:
There, when kings will sit to feast,
They get their fill before they think
With poisoned meat and poisoned drink.
He gathered all that springs to birth
From the many-venomed earth;
First a little, thence to more,
He sampled all her killing store;
And easy, smiling, seasoned sound,
Sate the king when healths went round.
They put arsenic in his meat
And stared aghast to watch him eat;
They poured strychnine in his cup
And shook to see him drink it up:
They shook, they stared as white's their shirt:
Them it was their poison hurt.
—I tell the tale that I heard told.
Mithridates, he died old.

LIONEL JOHNSON (1867–1902)

OXFORD NIGHTS

To Victor Plarr

About the august and ancient *Square,*
Cries the wild wind; and through the air,
The blue night air, blows keen and chill:
Else, all the night sleeps, all is still.
Now, the lone *Square* is blind with gloom:
Now, on that clustering chestnut bloom,
A cloudy moonlight plays, and falls
In glory upon *Bodley's* walls:
Now, wildlier yet, while moonlight pales,
Storm the tumultuary gales.
O rare divinity of Night!
Season of undisturbed delight:
Glad interspace of day and day!

Without, an world of winds at play:
Within, I hear what dead friends say.
Blow, winds! and round that perfect *Dome,*
Wail as you will, and sweep, and roam:
Above *Saint Mary's* carven home,
Struggle, and smite to your desire
The sainted watchers on her spire:
Or in the distance vex your power
Upon mine own *New College* tower:
You hurt not these! On me and mine,
Clear candlelights in quiet shine:
My fire lives yet! nor have I done
With *Smollett,* nor with *Richardson:*
With, gentlest of the martyrs! *Lamb,*
Whose lover I, long lover, am:
With *Gray,* whose gracious spirit knew
The sorrows of art's lonely few:
With *Fielding,* great, and strong, and tall;
Sterne, exquisite, equivocal;
Goldsmith, the dearest of them all:
While *Addison's* demure delights
Turn *Oxford,* into *Attic,* nights.
Still *Trim* and *Parson Adams* keep
Me better company, than sleep:
Dark sleep, who loves not me; nor I
Love well her nightly death to die,
And in her haunted chapels lie.
Sleep wins me not: but from his shelf
Brings me each wit his very self:
Beside my chair the great ghosts throng,
Each tells his story, sings his song:
And in the ruddy fire I trace
The curves of each *Augustan* face.
I sit at *Doctor Primrose'* board:
I hear *Beau Tibbs* discuss a lord.
Mine, *Matthew Bramble's* pleasant wrath;
Mine, all the humors of the *Bath.*
Sir Roger and the *Man in Black*
Bring me the *Golden Ages* back.
Now white *Clarissa* meets her fate,
With virgin will inviolate:
Now *Lovelace* wins me with a smile,
Lovelace, adorable and vile.
I taste, in slow alternate way,
Letters of *Lamb,* letters of *Gray:*
Nor lives there, beneath *Oxford* towers,
More joy, than in my silent hours.
Dream, who love dreams! forget all grief:
Find, in sleep's nothingness, relief:
Better my dreams! Dear, human books,
With kindly voices, winning looks!
Enchaunt me with your spells of art,
And draw me homeward to your heart:
Till weariness and things unkind
Seem but a vain and passing wind:
Till the gray morning slowly creep
Upward, and rouse the birds from sleep:
Till *Oxford* bells the silence break,
And find me happier, for your sake.
Then, with the dawn of common day,
Rest you! But I, upon my way,
What the fates bring, will cheerlier do,
In days not yours, through thoughts of you!

RUDYARD KIPLING (1865–)

TOMMY

I went into a public-'ouse to get a pint o' beer,
The publican 'e up an' sez, "We serve no redcoats here."
The girls be'ind the bar they laughed an' giggled fit to die,
I outs into the street again, an' to myself sez I:
O it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy go away";
But it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play,
The band begins to play, my boys, the band begins to play,
O it's "Thank you, Mister Atkins," when the band begins to play.

I went into a theatre as sober as could be,
They give a drunk civilian room, but 'adn't none for me:

They sent me to the gallery or round the music-'alls
But when it comes to fightin', Lord! they'll shove me in the stalls.
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy wait outside;"
But it's "Special train for Atkins," when the trooper's on the tide,
The troopship's on the tide, my boys, etc.

O makin' mock o' uniforms that guard you while you sleep
Is cheaper than them uniforms, an' they're starvation cheap;
An' hustlin' drunken sodgers when they're goin' large a bit
Is five times better business than paradin' in full kit.
Then it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy, 'ow's yer soul?"
But it's "Thin red line of 'eroes" when the drums begin to roll,
The drums begin to roll, my boys, etc.

We aren't no thin red 'eroes, nor we aren't no blackguards too,
But single men in barricks, most remarkable like you;
An' if sometimes our conduck isn't all your fancy paints,
Why, single men in barricks don't grow into plaster saints.
While it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Tommy fall be-'ind;"
But it's "Please to walk in front, sir," when there's trouble in the wind,
There's trouble in the wind, my boys, etc.

You talk o' better food for us, an' schools, an' fires, an' all;
We'll wait for extry rations if you treat us rational.
Don't mess about the cook-room slops, but prove it to our face
The Widow's uniform is not the soldier-man's disgrace.
For it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' "Chuck him out, the brute!"
But it's "Saviour of 'is country" when the guns begin to shoot;
An' it's Tommy this, an' Tommy that, an' anything you please;
An' Tommy ain't a bloomin' fool —you bet that Tommy sees!

FUZZY-WUZZY

(*Soudan Expeditionary Force*)

We've fought with many men acrost the seas,
An' some of 'em was brave an' some was not:
The Paythan an' the Zulu an' Burmese;
But the Fuzzy was the finest o' the lot.
We never got a ha'porth's change of 'im:
'E squatted in the scrub an' 'ocked our 'orses,
'E cut our sentries up at Sua*kim*,
An' 'e played the cat an' banjo with our forces.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
We gives you your certifikit, an' if you want it signed
We'll come an' 'ave a romp with you whenever you're inclined.

We took our chanst among the Kyber 'ills,
The Boers knocked us silly at a mile,
The Burman guv us Irriwaddy chills,
An' a Zulu *impi* dished us up in style:

But all we ever got from such as they
Was pop to what the Fuzzy made us swaller;
We 'eld our bloomin' own, the papers say,
But man for man the Fuzzy knocked us 'oller.
Then 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' the missis and the kid;
Our orders was to break you, an' of course we went an' did.
We sloshed you with Martinis, an' it wasn't 'ardly fair;
But for all the odds agin you, Fuzzy-Wuz, you bruk the square.

'E 'asn't got no papers of 'is own,
'E 'asn't got no medals nor rewards,
So we must certify the skill 'e's shown
In usin' of 'is long two-'anded swords:
When 'e's 'oppin' in an' out among the bush
With 'is coffin-'eaded shield an' shovel-spear,
A 'appy day with Fuzzy on the rush
Will last a 'ealthy Tommy for a year.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, an' your friends which is no more,
If we 'adn't lost some messmates we would 'elp you to deplore;
But give an' take's the gospel, an' we'll call the bargain fair,
For if you 'ave lost more than us, you crumpled up the square!

'E rushes at the smoke when we let drive,
An', before we know, 'e's 'ackin' at our 'ead;
'E's all 'ot sand an' ginger when alive,
An' 'e's generally shammin' when 'e's dead.
'E's a daisy, 'e's a ducky, 'e's a lamb!
'E's a injia-rubber idiot on the spree.
'E's the on'y thing that doesn't care a damn
For the Regiment o' British Infantree.
So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
You're a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man;
An' 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-Wuzzy, with your 'ayrick 'ead of 'air—
You big black boundin' beggar—for you bruk a British square.

GUNGA DIN

The *bhisti*, or water-carrier, attached to regiments in India, is often one of the most devoted of the Queen's servants. He is also appreciated by the men.

You may talk o' gin an' beer
When you're quartered safe out 'ere,
An' you're sent to penny-fights an' Aldershot it;
But if it comes to slaughter
You will do your work on water,
An' you'll lick the bloomin' boots of 'im that's got it.
Now in Injia's sunny clime,
Where I used to spend my time
A-servin' of 'Er Majesty the Queen,
Of all them black-faced crew
The finest man I knew
Was our regimental *bhisti*, Gunga Din.
He was "Din! Din! Din!
You limpin' lump o' brick-dust, Gunga Din!
Hi! *slippy hitherao!*
Water, get it! *Panee lao!*[1]
You squidgy-nosed old idol, Gunga Din!"

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,

[1] Bring water swiftly.

For a twisty piece o' rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find,
When the sweatin' troop-train lay
In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted "Harry By!" [1]
Till our throats were bricky-dry,
Then we wopped 'im 'cause 'e couldn't serve us all.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
You 'eathen, where the mischief 'ave you been?
You put some *juldee* in it,
Or I'll *marrow* you [2] this minute
If you don't fill up my helmet, Gunga Din!"

'E would dot an' carry one
Till the longest day was done,
An' 'e didn't seem to know the use o' fear.
If we charged or broke or cut,
You could bet your bloomin' nut,
'E'd be waitin' fifty paces right flank rear.
With 'is *mussick* on 'is back,
'E would skip with our attack,
An' watch us till the bugles made "Retire."
An' for all 'is dirty 'ide
'E was white, clear white, inside
When 'e went to tend the wounded under fire!
It was "Din! Din! Din!"
With the bullets kickin' dust spots on the green.
When the cartridges ran out,
You could 'ear the front-files shout:
"Hi! ammunition-mules an' Gunga Din!"

I sha'n't forgit the night
When I dropped be'ind the fight
With a bullet where my belt-plate should 'a' been.
I was chokin' mad with thirst,
An' the man that spied me first
Was our good old grinnin', gruntin' Gunga Din.
'E lifted up my 'ead,
An' 'e plugged me where I bled,
An' 'e guv me 'arf-a-pint o' water—green:
It was crawlin' an it stunk,
But of all the drinks I've drunk,
I'm gratefullest to one from Gunga Din.
It was "Din! Din! Din!
'Ere's a beggar with a bullet through 'is spleen;
'E's chawin' up the ground an' 'e's kickin' all around:
For Gawd's sake git the water, Gunga Din!"

'E carried me away
To where a *dooli* lay,
An' a bullet come an' drilled the beggar clean.
'E put me safe inside,
An' just before 'e died:
"I 'ope you liked your drink," sez Gunga Din.
So I'll meet 'im later on
In the place where 'e is gone—
Where it's always double drill and no canteen;
'E'll be squattin' on the coals
Givin' drink to pore damned souls,
An' I'll get a swig in Hell from Gunga Din!
Din! Din! Din!
You Lazarushian-leather Gunga Din!
Tho' I've belted you an' flayed you,
By the livin' Gawd that made you,
You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!

[1] Mr. Atkins's equivalent for "O Brother!"
[2] hit you

MANDALAY

By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' eastward to the sea,
There's a Burma girl a-settin', an' I know she thinks o' me;
For the wind is in the palm-trees, an' the temple-bells they say:
"Come you back, you British soldier: come you back to Mandalay!"
Come you back to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay:
Can't you 'ear their paddles chunkin' from Rangoon to Mandalay?
O the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

'Er petticut was yaller an' 'er little cap was green,
An' 'er name was Supi-yaw-lat—jes' the same as Theebaw's Queen,
An' I seed her fust a-smokin' of a whackin' white cheroot,
An' a-wastin' Christian kisses on an 'eathen idol's foot:
Bloomin' idol made o' mud—
Wot they called the Great Gawd Budd—
Plucky lot she cared for idols when I kissed 'er where she stud!
On the road to Mandalay—

When the mist was on the rice-fields an' the sun was droppin' slow,
She'd git 'er little banjo an' she'd sing *"Kul-la-lo-lo!"*
With 'er arm upon my shoulder, an' her cheek agin my cheek
We useter watch the steamers an' the *hathis* pilin' teak.
Elephints a-pilin' teak
In the sludgy, squdgy creek,
Where the silence 'ung that 'eavy you was 'arf afraid to speak!
On the road to Mandalay—

But that's all shove be'ind me—long ago an' fur away,
An' there ain't no 'buses runnin' from the Benk to Mandalay;
An' I'm learnin' 'ere in London what the ten-year sodger tells:
"If you've 'eard the East a-callin', why, you won't 'eed nothin' else."
No! you won't 'eed nothin' else
But them spicy garlic smells
An' the sunshine an' the palm-trees an' the tinkly temple bells!
On the road to Mandalay—

I am sick o' wastin' leather on these gutty pavin'-stones,
An' the blasted Henglish drizzle wakes the fever in my bones;
Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the Strand,
An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?
Beefy face an' grubby 'and—
Law! wot *do* they understand?
I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land!
On the road to Mandalay—

Ship me somewheres east of Suez where the best is like the worst,
Where there aren't no Ten Commandments, an' a man can raise a thirst;
For the temple-bells are callin', an' it's there that I would be—
By the old Moulmein Pagoda, lookin' lazy at the sea—
On the road to Mandalay,
Where the old Flotilla lay,
With our sick beneath the awnings when we went to Mandalay!

Oh, the road to Mandalay,
Where the flyin'-fishes play,
An' the dawn comes up like thunder outer China 'crost the Bay!

THE VAMPIRE

(*As suggested by the Painting by Philip Burne-Jones*)

A fool there was and he made his prayer
(Even as you and I!)
To a rag and a bone and a hank of hair
(We called her the woman who did not care),
But the fool he called her his lady fair
(Even as you and I!)

Oh the years we waste and the tears we waste
And the work of our head and hand
Belong to the woman who did not know
(And now we know that she never could know)
And did not understand.

A fool there was and his goods he spent
(Even as you and I!)
Honor and faith and a sure intent
(And it wasn't the least what the lady meant),
But a fool must follow his natural bent
(Even as you and I!)

Oh the toil we lost and the spoil we lost
And the excellent things we planned
Belong to the woman who didn't know why
(And now we know she never knew why)
And did not understand.

The fool was stripped to his foolish hide
(Even as you and I!)
Which she might have seen when she threw him aside—
(But it isn't on record the lady tried)
So some of him lived but the most of him died—
(Even as you and I!)

And it isn't the shame and it isn't the blame
That stings like a white-hot brand.
It's coming to know that she never knew why
(Seeing at last she could never know why)
And never could understand.

RECESSIONAL [1]

(*A Victorian Ode*)

God of our fathers, known of old—
Lord of our far-flung battle line—
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

The tumult and the shouting dies—
The Captains and the Kings depart—
Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
An humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Far-called, our navies melt away—
On dune and headland sinks the fire—
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the Nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

If, drunk with sight of power, we loose
Wild tongues that have not thee in awe—
Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
Or lesser breeds without the Law—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

[1] Written at the time of Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897.

For heathen heart that puts her trust
  In reeking tube and iron shard—
All valiant dust that builds on dust,
  And guarding calls not Thee to guard.
For frantic boast and foolish words,
Thy Mercy on Thy People, Lord!
Amen.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE (1871–1917)

THE HOMECOMING OF THE SHEEP

The sheep are coming home in Greece,
Hark the bells on every hill!
Flock by flock, and fleece by fleece,
Wandering wide a little piece
Thro' the evening red and still,
Stopping where the pathways cease,
Cropping with a hurried will.

Thro' the cotton-bushes low
Merry boys with shouldered crooks
Close them in a single row,
Shout among them as they go
With one bell-ring o'er the brooks.
Such delight you never knew
Reading it from gilded books.

Before the early stars are bright
Cormorants and sea-gulls call,
And the moon comes large and white
Filling with a lovely light
The ferny curtained waterfall.
Then sleep wraps every bell up tight
And the climbing moon grows small.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE (1866–)

A BALLAD OF LONDON

Ah, London! London! our delight,
Great flower that opens but at night,
Great City of the midnight sun,
Whose day begins when day is done.

Lamp after lamp against the sky
Opens a sudden beaming eye,
Leaping alight on either hand,
The iron lilies of the Strand.

Like dragonflies, the hansoms hover,
With jeweled eyes, to catch the lover;
The streets are full of lights and loves,
Soft gowns, and flutter of soiled doves.

The human moths about the light
Dash and cling close in dazed delight,
And burn and laugh, the world and wife,
For this is London, this is life!

Upon thy petals butterflies,
But at thy root, some say, there lies,
A world of weeping trodden things,
Poor worms that have not eyes or wings.

From out corruption of their woe
Springs this bright flower that charms us so,
Men die and rot deep out of sight
To keep this jungle-flower bright.

Paris and London, World-Flowers twain
Wherewith the World-Tree blooms again,
Since Time hath gathered Babylon,
And withered Rome still withers on.

Sidon and Tyre were such as ye,
How bright they shone upon the tree!
But Time hath gathered, both are gone,
And no man sails to Babylon.

WINIFRED M. LETTS (1887–)

THE SPIRES OF OXFORD[1]

I saw the spires of Oxford
  As I was passing by,
The gray spires of Oxford
  Against the pearl-gray sky;
My heart was with the Oxford men
  Who went abroad to die.

[1] By permission from *The Spires of Oxford*, copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company.

The years go fast in Oxford,
The golden years and gay,
The hoary Colleges look down
On careless boys at play.
But when the bugles sounded war
They put their games away.

They left the peaceful river,
The cricket-field, the quad,
The shaven lawns of Oxford,
To seek a bloody sod.
They gave their merry youth away
For country and for God.

God rest you, happy gentlemen,
Who laid your good lives down,
Who took the khaki and the gun
Instead of cap and gown.
God bring you to a fairer place
Than even Oxford town.

JOHN McCRAE (1872–1918)

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

JOHN MASEFIELD (1878-)

SEA FEVER [1]

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And the gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again to the vagrant gipsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

[1] The following four poems are reprinted by permission from *The Plays and Poems of John Masefield*, copyright 1918 by The Macmillan Company.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine,
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest.

"Will you not come home, brother? you have been long away,
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the spray;
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the rain,—
Will you not come home, brother, home to us again?

The young corn is green, brother, where the rabbits run,
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and sun.
It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's brain,
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring again.

Larks are singing in the west, brother, above the green wheat,
So will ye not come home, brother, and rest your tired feet?
I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for aching eyes,"
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries.

It's the white road westward is the road I must tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for heart and head,
To the violets and the brown brooks and the thrushes' song,
In the fine land, the west land, the land where I belong.

CARGOES

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

LAUGH AND BE MERRY

Laugh and be merry, remember, better the world with a song,
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of a wrong.
Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the length of a span.
Laugh and be proud to belong to the old proud pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry: remember, in olden time,
God made Heaven and Earth for joy He took in a rhyme,
Made them, and filled them full with the strong red wine of His mirth,
The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep blue cup of the sky,
Join the jubilant song of the great stars sweeping by,
Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the wine outpoured
In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers akin,
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful inn,
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of the music ends.
Laugh till the game is played; and be you merry, my friends.

ALICE MEYNELL (1850–1922)

RENOUNCEMENT

I must not think of thee; and, tired yet strong,
I shun the thought that lurks in all delight—
The thought of thee—and in the blue Heaven's height,
And in the sweetest passage of a song.
O just beyond the fairest thoughts that throng
This breast, the thought of thee waits, hidden yet bright;
But it must never, never come in sight;
I must stop short of thee the whole day long.
But when sleep comes to close each difficult day,
When night gives pause to the long watch I keep,
And all my bonds I needs must loose apart,
Must doff my will as raiment laid away,—
With the first dream that comes with the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart.

THE SHEPHERDESS

She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.
Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep;
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.

She roams maternal hills and bright,
Dark valleys safe and deep.
Into that tender breast at night
The chastest stars may peep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

She holds her little thoughts in sight,
Though gay they run and leap.
She is so circumspect and right;
She has her soul to keep.
She walks—the lady of my delight—
A shepherdess of sheep.

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT (1862–)

THE TORCH OF LIFE

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote—
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red,—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;—

The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honor a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks:
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind—
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

ALFRED NOYES (1880-)

THE BARREL-ORGAN

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old romance,
And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of France,
And now it's prattling softly to the moon,
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
For what the cold machinery forgets. . . .

Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
Through all the moods that pass;
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colors it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—*a dance!*—

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!)
And there they say, when dawn is high and all the world's a blaze of sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The Dorian nightingale is rare and yet
they say you'll hear him there
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh,
so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after
dark the long halloo
And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of
owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any
kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh,
so near to London!)
And when the rose begins to pout and all
the chestnut spires are out
You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all
chorusing for London:—

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill
the golden street,
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And in all the gaudy busses there are
scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull
mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a
love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset,
through the poppies and the
wheat,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore*
did you dream
Of the City when the sun sinks low,
Of the organ and the monkey and the
many-colored stream
On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad
eyes that seem
To be litten for a moment with a wild
Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's
eternal theme
And pulses with the sunset-glow.

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with
a face of frozen stone
In the City as the sun sinks low;
There's a portly man of business with a
balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of
a soft reposeful tone.
And they're all of them returning to the
heavens they have known:
They are crammed and jammed in busses
and—they're each of them alone
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a very modish woman and her
smile is very bland
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And her hansom jingles onward, but her
little jeweled hand
Is clenched a little tighter and she cannot
understand
What she wants or why she wanders to
that undiscovered land,
For the parties there are not at all the
sort of thing she planned,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a rowing man that listens and his
heart is crying out
In the City as the sun sinks low;
For the barge, the eight, the Isis, and the
coach's whoop and shout,
For the minute-gun, the counting and the
long disheveled rout,
For the howl along the tow-path and a
fate that's still in doubt,
For a roughened oar to handle and a race
to think about
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a laborer that listens to the voices
of the dead
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his
face to smolder red
As he sees a loafer watching him and—
there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his
April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his
lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead
dreams go.

There's an old and haggard demi-rep, it's
ringing in her ears,
In the City as the sun sinks low;
With the wild and empty sorrow of the
love that blights and sears,
Oh, and if she hurries onward, then be
sure, be sure she hears,
Hears and bears the bitter burden of the
unforgotten years,
And her laugh's a little harsher and her
eyes are brimmed with tears
For the land where the dead dreams
go.

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a
golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a
world to make it sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the
earth and heaven meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a
hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the
poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams
go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
What have you to say
When you meet the garland girls
Tripping on their way?
All around my gala hat
I wear a wreath of roses
(A long and lonely year it is
I've waited for the May!)
If any one should ask you,
The reason why I wear it is—
My own love, my true love
Is coming home to-day.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for
the lady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's
lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady
While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll
find it shady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's
lilac-time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the
lady,
And tell her she's your own true
love.

There's a barrel-organ caroling across a
golden street
In the City as the sun sinks glittering
and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the
world has made it sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that
make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where
the night and morning meet,
As it dies into the sunset-glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the
City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a
large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part
to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and
night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again.

Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain,
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remembers all
The wheeling song forgets.

Once more *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song:
Once more *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
Once more the knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance
Till once, once more, the shattered foe
Has whirled into—*a dance!*

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

A VICTORY DANCE

The cymbals crash,
And the dancers walk,
With long silk stockings
And arms of chalk,
Butterfly skirts,
And white breasts bare,
And shadows of dead men
Watching 'em there.

Shadows of dead men
Stand by the wall,
Watching the fun
Of the Victory Ball.
They do not reproach,
Because they know,
If they're forgotten,
It's better so.

Under the dancing
Feet are the graves.
Dazzle and motley,
In long bright waves,
Brushed by the palm-fronds,
Grapple and whirl
Ox-eyed matron,
And slim white girl.

Fat wet bodies
Go waddling by,
Girded with satin,
Though God knows why;
Gripped by satyrs
In white and black,
With a fat wet hand
On a fat wet back.

See, there is one child
Fresh from school,
Learning the ropes
As the old hands rule.
God, how that dead boy
Gapes and grins,
As the tom-toms bang
And the shimmy begins.

"What did you think
We should find," said a shade,
"When the last shot echoed
And peace was made?"
"Christ," laughed the fleshless
Jaws of his friend,
"I thought they'd be praying
For worlds to mend,

"Making earth better,
Or something silly,
Like white-washing hell
Or Picca-dam-dilly.
They've a sense of humor,
These women of ours,
These exquisite lilies,
These fresh young flowers!"

"Pish," said a statesman,
Standing near,

"I'm glad they can busy
Their thoughts elsewhere!
We mustn't reproach 'em.
They're young, you see."
"Ah," said the dead men,
"So were we!"

Victory! Victory!
On with the dance!
Back to the jungle
The new beasts prance!
God, how the dead men
Grin by the wall,
Watching the fun
Of the Victory Ball.

ARTHUR O'SHAUGHNESSY
(1844–1881)

ODE

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the Old of the New World's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

COVENTRY PATMORE
(1823–1896)

THE TOYS

My little Son, who look'd from thoughtful eyes
And moved and spoke in quiet grown-up wise,
Having my law the seventh time disobey'd,
I struck him and dismiss'd
With hard words and unkiss'd,
—His Mother, who was patient, being dead.
Then, fearing lest his grief should hinder sleep,
I visited his bed,
But found him slumbering deep,
With darken'd eyelids, and their lashes yet
From his late sobbing wet.
And I, with moan,
Kissing away his tears, left others of my own;
For, on a table drawn beside his head,
He had put, within his reach,
A box of counters and a red-vein'd stone,
A piece of glass abraded by the beach
And six or seven shells,
A bottle with bluebells
And two French copper coins, ranged there with careful art,
To comfort his sad heart.
So when that night I pray'd
To God, I wept, and said:
Ah, when at last we lie with trancèd breath,
Not vexing Thee in death,
And Thou rememberest with what toys
We made our joys,
How weakly understood
Thy great commanded good,
Then, fatherly not less
Than I whom Thou hast molded from the clay,
Thou'lt leave Thy wrath, and say,
"I will be sorry for their childishness."

STEPHEN PHILLIPS (1868–1915)

I IN THE GRAYNESS ROSE

I in the grayness rose;
  I could not sleep for thinking of one dead.
Then to the chest I went,
  Where lie the things of my beloved spread.

Quickly these I took;
  A little glove, a sheet of music torn,
Paintings, ill-done, perhaps;
  Then lifted up a dress that she had worn.

And now I came to where
  Her letters are; they lie beneath the rest;
And read them in the haze;
  She spoke of many things, was sore oppressed.

But these things moved me not;
  Not when she spoke of being parted quite,
Or being misunderstood,
  Or growing weary of the world's great fight.

Not even when she wrote
  Of our dead child, and the handwriting swerved;
Not even then I shook:
  Not even by such words was I unnerved.

I thought, she is at peace;
  Whither the child is gone, she too has passed.
And a much-needed rest
  Is fallen upon her, she is still at last.

But when at length I took
  From under all those letters one small sheet,
Folded and writ in haste;
  Why did my heart with sudden sharpness beat?

Alas! it was not sad!
  Her saddest words I had read calmly o'er.
Alas! it had no pain!
  Her painful words, all these I knew before.

A hurried, happy line!
  A little jest, too slight for one so dead:
This did I not endure:
  Then with a shuddering heart no more I read.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (1886–)

A CONCERT PARTY[1]

(Egyptian Base Camp)

They are gathering round . . .
Out of the twilight; over the gray-blue sand
Shoals of low-jargoning men drift inward to the sound—
The jangle and throb of a piano . . . tum-ti-tum . . .
Drawn by a lamp, they come
Out of the glimmering lines of their tents, over the shuffling sand.

O sing us the songs, the songs of our own land,
You warbling ladies in white.
Dimness conceals the hunger in our faces,
This wall of faces risen out of the night,
These eyes that keep their memories of the places
So long beyond their sight.
Jaded and gay, the ladies sing; and the chap in brown
Tilts his gray hat; jaunty and lean and pale,
He rattles the keys. . . . Some actor-bloke from town . . .

[1] This and the following poem are reprinted by permission from *The Old Huntsman* by Siegfried Sassoon, copyright by E. P. Dutton & Company.

God send you home; and then *A long, long trail;*
I hear you calling me; and *Dixieland* . . .
Sing slowly . . . now the chorus . . . one by one
We hear them, drink them; till the concert's done.
Silent, I watch the shadowy mass of soldiers stand.
Silent, they drift away over the glimmering sand.

Kantara, *April,* 1918.

THE OLD HUNTSMAN

I've never ceased to curse the day I signed
A seven years' bargain for the Golden Fleece.
'Twas a bad deal all round; and dear enough
It cost me, what with my daft management,
And the mean folk as owed and never paid me,
And backing losers; and the local bucks
Egging me on with whiskies while I bragged
The man I was when huntsman to the Squire.
I'd have been prosperous if I'd took a farm
Of seventy acres, drove by gig and haggled
At Monday markets; now I've squandered all
My savings; nigh three hundred pound I got
As testimonial when I'd grown too stiff
And slow to press a beaten fox.

The Fleece!
'Twas the damned Fleece that wore my Emily out,
The wife of thirty years who served me well;
(Not like this beldam clattering in the kitchen,
That never trims a lamp nor sweeps the floor,
And brings me greasy soup in a foul crock.)
Blast the old harridan! What's fetched her now,
Leaving me in the dark, and short of fire?
And where's my pipe? 'Tis lucky I've a turn
For thinking, and remembering all that's past.
And now's my hour, before I hobble to bed,
To set the works a-wheezing, wind the clock
That keeps the time of life with feeble tick
Behind my bleared old face that stares and wonders.

. . . . . .

It's queer how, in the dark, comes back to mind
Some morning of September. We've been digging
In a steep, sandy warren, riddled with holes,
And I've just pulled the terrier out and left
A sharp-nosed cub-face blinking there and snapping,
Then in a moment seen him mobbed and torn
To strips in the baying hurly of the pack.
I picture it so clear: the dusty sunshine
On bracken, and the men with spades, that wipe
Red faces: one tilts up a mug of ale.
And, having stooped to clean my gory hands,
I whistle the jostling beauties out o' the wood.

I'm but a daft old fool! I often wish
The Squire were back again—ah, he was a man!

They don't breed men like him these days; he'd come
For sure, and sit and talk and suck his briar
Till the old wife brings up a dish of tea.
Aye, those were days, when I was serving Squire!
I never knowed such sport as '85,
The winter afore the one that snowed us silly.

. . . . . .

Once in a way the parson will drop in
And read a bit o' the Bible, if I'm bad,—
Pray the Good Lord to make my spirit whole
In faith: he leaves some 'baccy on the shelf,
And wonders I don't keep a dog to cheer me,
Because he knows I'm mortal fond of dogs!

I ask you, what's a gent like that to me,
As wouldn't know Elijah if I saw him,
Nor have the wit to keep him on the talk?
'Tis kind of parson to be troubling still
With such as me; but he's a town-bred chap,
Full of his college notions and Christmas hymns.

Religion beats me. I'm amazed at folk
Drinking the gospels in and never scratching
Their heads for questions. When I was a lad
I learned a bit from mother, and never thought
To educate myself for prayers and psalms.

But now I'm old and bald and serious-minded,
With days to sit and ponder. I'd no chance
When young and gay to get the hang of all
This Hell and Heaven; and when the clergy hoick
And holloa from their pulpits, I'm asleep,
However hard I listen; and when they pray
It seems we're all like children sucking sweets
In school, and wondering whether master sees.

I used to dream of Hell when I was first
Promoted to a huntsman's job, and scent
Was rotten, and all the foxes disappeared,
And hounds were short of blood: and officers
From barracks over-rode 'em all day long
On weedy, whistling nags that knocked a hole
In every fence; good sportsmen to a man
And brigadiers by now, but dreadful hard
On a young huntsman keen to show some sport.

Aye, Hell was thick with captains, and I rode
The lumbering brute that's beat in half a mile,
And blunders into every blind old ditch.
Hell was the coldest scenting land I've known,
And both my whips were always lost, and hounds
Would never get their heads down; and a man
On a great yawing chestnut trying to cast 'em
While I was in a corner pounded by
The ugliest hog-backed stile you've clapped your eyes on.
There was an iron-spiked fence round all the coverts,
And civil-spoken keepers I couldn't trust,
And the main earth unstopp'd. The fox I found
Was always a three-legged 'un from a bag
Who reeked of aniseed and wouldn't run.

The farmers were all plowing their old pasture
And bellowing at me when I rode their beans
To cast for beaten fox, or galloped on
With hounds to a lucky view. I'd lost my voice
Although I shouted fit to burst my guts,
And couldn't blow my horn.

And when I woke,
Emily snored, and barn-cocks started crowing,
And morn was at the window; and I was glad
To be alive because I heard the cry
Of hounds like church-bells chiming on a Sunday,—
Aye, that's the song I'd wish to hear in Heaven!
The cry of hounds was Heaven for me: I know
Parson would call me crazed and wrong to say it,
But where's the use of life and being glad
If God's not in your gladness?

I've no brains
For book-learned studies; but I've heard men say
There's much in print that clergy have to wink at;
Though many I've met were jolly chaps, and rode
To hounds, and walked me puppies; and could pick
Good legs and loins and necks and shoulders, aye,
And feet,—'twas necks and feet I looked at first.

Some hounds I've known were wise as half your saints,
And better hunters. That old dog of the Duke's,
Harlequin; what a dog he was to draw!
And what a note he had, and what a nose
When foxes ran down wind and scent was catchy!
And that light lemon bitch of the Squire's, old Dorcas,—
She were a marvelous hunter, were old Dorcas!

Aye, oft I've thought: 'If there were hounds in Heaven,
With God as Master, taking no subscription;
And all His blessed country farmed by tenants;
And a straight-necked old fox in every gorse!'
But when I came to work it out, I found
There'd be too many huntsmen wanting places,—
Though some I've known might get a job with Nick!

. . . . . .

I've come to think of God as something like
The figure of a man the old Duke was
When I was turning hounds to Nimrod King,
Before his Grace was took so bad with gout,
And had to quit the saddle. Tall and spare,
Clean-shaved and gray, with shrewd, kind eyes, that twinkled,
And easy walk; who, when he gave good words,
Gave them whole-hearted; and would never blame
Without just cause. Lord God might be like that,
Sitting alone in a great room of books
Some evening after hunting.

Now I'm tired
With harkening to the tick-tack on the shelf;
And pondering makes me doubtful.

Riding home
On a moonless night of cloud that feels like frost
Though stars are hidden, (hold your feet up, horse!)
And thinking what a task I had to draw
A pack with all those lame 'uns, and the lot
Wanting a rest from all this open weather,—
That's what I'm doing now.

And likely, too,
The frost'll be a long 'un, and the night
One sleep. The parsons say we'll wake to find
A country blinding-white with dazzle of snow.

The naked stars make men feel lonely,—wheeling
And glinting on the puddles in the road.
And then you listen to the wind, and wonder
If folk are quite such bucks as they appear
When dressed by London tailors, looking down
Their boots at covert side, and thinking big.

. . . . . .

This world's a funny place to live in. Soon
I'll need to change my country; but I know
'Tis little enough I've understood my life,
And a power of sights I've missed, and foreign marvels.

I used to feel it, riding on spring days
In meadows pied with sun and chasing clouds,
And half forget how I was there to catch
The foxes; lose the angry, eager feeling
A huntsman ought to have, that's out for blood,
And means his hounds to get it!

Now I know
It's God that speaks to us when we're bewitched,
Smelling the hay in June and smiling quiet;
Or when there's been a spell of summer drought,
Lying awake and listening to the rain.

. . . . . .

I'd like to be the simpleton I was
In the old days when I was whipping-in
To a little harrier-pack in Worcestershire,
And loved a dairymaid, but never knew it
Until she'd wed another. So I've loved
My life; and when the good years are gone down,
Discover what I've lost.

I never broke
Out of my blundering self into the world,
But let it all go past me, like a man
Half-asleep in a land that's full of wars.

What a grand thing 'twould be if I could go
Back to the kennels now and take my hounds
For summer exercise: be riding out
With forty couple when the quiet skies
Are streaked with sunrise, and the silly birds
Grown hoarse with singing; cobwebs on the furze
Up on the hill, and all the country strange,
With no one stirring; and the horses fresh,
Sniffing the air I'll never breathe again.

. . . . . .

You've brought the lamp then, Martha? I've no mind
For newspaper to-night, nor bread and cheese.
Give me the candle, and I'll get to bed.

CHARLES HAMILTON SORLEY (1895–1915)

ALL THE HILLS AND VALES ALONG

All the hills and vales along
Earth is bursting into song,
And the singers are the chaps
Who are going to die perhaps.
O sing, marching men,
Till the valleys ring again.
Give your gladness to earth's keeping,
So be glad, when you are sleeping.

Cast away regret and rue,
Think what you are marching to.
Little live, great pass.
Jesus Christ and Barabbas
Were found the same day.
This died, that went his way.
So sing with joyful breath.
For why, you are going to death.
Teeming earth will surely store
All the gladness that you pour.

Earth that never doubts nor fears,
Earth that knows of death, not tears,
Earth that bore with joyful ease
Hemlock for Socrates,
Earth that blossomed and was glad
'Neath the cross that Christ had,
Shall rejoice and blossom too
When the bullet reaches you.
Wherefore, men marching
On the road to death, sing!
Pour your gladness on earth's head,
So be merry, so be dead.

From the hills and valleys earth
Shouts back the sound of mirth,
Tramp of feet and lilt of song
Ringing all the road along.
All the music of their going,
Ringing, swinging, glad song-throwing,
Earth will echo still, when foot
Lies numb and voice mute.
On, marching men, on
To the gates of death with song.
Sow your gladness for earth's reaping,
So you may be glad, though sleeping.
Strew your gladness on earth's bed,
So be merry, so be dead.

THE SONG OF THE UNGIRT RUNNERS

We swing ungirded hips,
And lightened are our eyes,
The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
We know not whom we trust
Nor whitherward we fare,
But we run because we must
Through the great wide air.

The waters of the seas
Are troubled as by storm.
The tempest strips the trees
And does not leave them warm.
Does the tearing tempest pause?
Do the tree-tops ask it why?
So we run without a cause
'Neath the big bare sky.

The rain is on our lips,
We do not run for prize.
But the storm the water whips
And the wave howls to the skies.
The winds arise and strike it
And scatter it like sand,
And we run because we like it
Through the broad bright land.

ARTHUR SYMONS (1865–)

MODERN BEAUTY

I am the torch, she saith, and what to me
If the moth die of me? I am the flame
Of Beauty, and I burn that all may see
Beauty, and I have neither joy nor shame,

But live with that clear light of perfect fire
Which is to men the death of their desire.

I am Yseult and Helen, I have seen
Troy burn, and the most loving knight lie dead.
The world has been my mirror, time has been
My breath upon the glass; and men have said,
Age after age, in rapture and despair,
Love's poor few words, before my image there.

I live, and am immortal; in my eyes
The sorrow of the world, and on my lips
The joy of life, mingle to make me wise;
Yet now the day is darkened with eclipse:
Who is there still lives for beauty? Still am I
The torch, but where's the moth that still dares die?

FRANCIS THOMPSON (1859–1907)

DREAM-TRYST

The breaths of kissing night and day
Were mingled in the eastern Heaven:
Throbbing with unheard melody
Shook Lyra all its star-chord seven:
When dusk shrunk cold, and light trod shy,
And dawn's gray eyes were troubled gray;
And souls went palely up the sky,
And mine to Lucidé.

There was no change in her sweet eyes
Since last I saw those sweet eyes shine;
There was no change in her deep heart
Since last that deep heart knocked at mine.

Her eyes were clear, her eyes were Hope's,
Wherein did ever come and go
The sparkle of the fountain-drops
From her sweet soul below.

The chambers in the house of dreams
Are fed with so divine an air,
That Time's hoar wings grow young therein,
And they who walk there are most fair.
I joyed for me, I joyed for her,
Who with the Past meet girt about:
Where our last kiss still warms the air,
Nor can her eyes go out.

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms or chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.
But with unhurrying chase,
An unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
"All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded outlaw-wise,
By many a hearted casement, curtained red,
Trellised with intertwining charities;

(For, though I knew His love Who followèd,
Yet was I sore adread
Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)
But, if one little casement parted wide,
The gust of His approach would clash it to:
Fear wist not to evade, as Love wist to pursue.
Across the margent of the world I fled,
And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,
Smiting for shelter on their clangèd bars;
Fretted to dulcet jars
And silvern chatter the pale ports o' the moon.
I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;
With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over
From this tremendous Lover—
Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!
I tempted all His servitors, but to find
My own betrayal in their constancy,
In faith to Him their fickleness to me,
Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.
To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;
Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.
But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,
The long savannahs of the blue;
Or whether, Thunder-driven,
They changed his chariot 'thwart a heaven
Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:—
Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.
Still with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
Came on the following Feet,
And a Voice above their beat—
"Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

I sought no more that after which I strayed
In face of man or maid;
But still within the little children's eyes
Seems something, something that replies:
They at least are for me, surely for me!
I turned me to them very wistfully;
But, just as their young eyes grew sudden fair
With dawning answers there,
Their angel plucked them from me by the hair.
"Come then, ye other children, Nature's—share
With me" (said I) "your delicate fellowship;
Let me greet you lip to lip,
Let me twine with you caresses,
Wantoning
With our Lady-Mother's vagrant tresses,
Banqueting
With her in her wind-walled palace,
Underneath her azured daïs,
Quaffing as your taintless way is,
From a chalice
Lucent-weeping out of the dayspring."

So it was done:
I in their delicate fellowship was one—
Drew the bolt of Nature's secrecies.
I knew all the swift importings
On the wilful face of skies;
I knew how the clouds arise
Spumèd of the wild sea-snortings;
All that's born or dies
Rose and drooped with; made them shapers
Of mine own moods, or wailful or divine;
With them joyed or was bereaven.
I was heavy with the even,

When she lit her glimmering tapers
Round the day's dead sanctities.
I laughed in the morning's eyes.
I triumphed and I saddened with all weather,
Heaven and I wept together,
And its sweet tears were salt with mortal mine;
Against the red throb of its sunset-heart
I laid my own to beat,
And share commingling heat;
But not by that, by that, was eased my human smart.
In vain my tears were wet on Heaven's gray cheek.
For ah! we know not what each other says,
These things and I; in sound *I* speak—
Their sound is but their stir, they speak by silences.
Nature, poor stepdame, cannot slake my drouth;
Let her, if she would owe me,
Drop yon blue bosom-veil of sky, and show me
The breasts o' her tenderness:
Never did any milk of hers once bless
My thirsting mouth.
Nigh and nigh draws the chase
With unperturbèd pace
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy;
And past those noisèd Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet—
"Lo! naught contents thee, who content'st not Me."

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast hewn from me,
And smitten me to my knee;
I am defenseless utterly.
I slept, methinks, and woke,
And, slowly gazing, find me stripped in sleep.
In the rash lustihead of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years—
My mangled youth lies dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke,
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.
Yea, faileth now even dream
The dreamer, and the lute the lutanist;
Even the linked fantasies, in whose blossoming twist
I swung the earth a trinket at my wrist,
Are yielding; cords of all too weak account
For earth with heavy griefs so overplussed.
Ah! is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must—
Designer infinite!—
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?
My freshness spent its wavering shower i' the dust;
And now my heart is as a broken fount,
Wherein tear-drippings stagnate, spilt down ever
From the dank thoughts that shiver
Upon the sighful branches of my mind.
Such is; what is to be?
The pulp so bitter, how shall taste the rind?
I dimly guess what Time in mists confounds;
Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds
From the hid battlements of Eternity;
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half glimpsèd turrets slowly wash again.
But not ere him who summoneth
I first have seen, enwound

With glooming robes purpureal, cypress-crowned;
His name I know, and what his trumpet saith.
Whether man's heart or life it be which yields
Thee harvest, must Thy harvest-fields
Be dunged with rotten death?

Now of that long pursuit
Comes on at hand the bruit;
That voice is round me like a bursting sea:
"And is thy earth so marred,
Shattered in shard on shard?
Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!
Strange, piteous, futile thing!
Wherefore should any set thee love apart?
Seeing none but I makes much of naught"
(He said),
"And human love, needs human merriting:
How hast thou merited—
Of all man's clotted clay the dingiest clot?
Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.
All which thy child's mistake
Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:
Rise, clasp my hand, and come!"

Halts by me that footfall:
Is my gloom, after all,
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
"Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

DAISY

Where the thistle lifts a purple crown
Six foot out of the turf,
And the harebell shakes on the windy hill—
O the breath of the distant surf!—

The hills look over on the South,
And southward dreams the sea;
And with the sea-breeze hand in hand
Came innocence and she.

Where 'mid the gorse the raspberry
Red for the gatherer springs,
Two children did we stray and talk
Wise, idle, childish things.

She listened with big-lipped surprise,
Breast-deep 'mid flower and spine:
Her skin was like a grape whose veins
Run snow instead of wine.

She knew not those sweet words she spake,
Nor knew her own sweet way;
But there's never a bird, so sweet a song
Thronged in whose throat that day.

Oh, there were flowers in Storrington
On the turf and on the spray;
But the sweetest flower on Sussex hills
Was the Daisy-flower that day!

Her beauty smooth'd earth's furrowed face.
She gave me tokens three:—
A look, a word of her winsome mouth,
And a wild raspberry.

A berry red, a guileless look,
A still word,—strings of sand!
And yet they made my wild, wild heart
Fly down to her little hand.

For standing artless as the air,
And candid as the skies,

She took the berries with her hand,
And the love with her sweet eyes.

The fairest things have fleetest end,
Their scent survives their close:
But the rose's scent is bitterness
To him that loved the rose.

She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way:—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.

She went her unremembering way,
She went and left in me
The pang of all the partings gone
And partings yet to be.

She left me marveling why my soul
Was sad that she was glad;
At all the sadness in the sweet,
The sweetness in the sad.

Still, still I seemed to see her, still
Look up with soft replies,
And take the berries with her hand,
And the love with her lovely eyes.

Nothing begins, and nothing ends,
That is not paid with moan;
For we are born in other's pain,
And perish in our own.

JAMES THOMSON (1834–1882)

REFLECTION

My love o'er the water bends dreaming;
It glideth and glideth away:
She sees there her own beauty, gleaming
Through shadow and ripple and spray.

O tell her, thou murmuring river,
As past her your light wavelets roll,
How steadfast that image forever
Shines pure in pure depths of my soul.

GIFTS

Give a man a horse he can ride,
Give a man a boat he can sail;
And his rank and wealth, his strength and health,
On sea nor shore shall fail.

Give a man a pipe he can smoke,
Give a man a book he can read:
And his home is bright with a calm delight,
Though the room be poor indeed.

Give a man a girl he can love,
As I, O my love, love thee;
And his heart is great with the pulse of Fate,
At home, on land, on sea.

SIR WILLIAM WATSON (1858–)

WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE

I.

The old rude church, with bare, bald tower, is here;
Beneath its shadow high-born Rotha flows;
Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near,
And with cool murmur lulling his repose.

Rotha, remembering well who slumbers near.
His hills, his lakes, his streams are with him yet.
Surely the heart that read her own heart clear
Nature forgets not soon: 'tis we forget.

We that with vagrant soul his fixity
Have slighted; faithless, done his deep faith wrong;

Left him for poorer loves, and bowed the knee
To misbegotten strange new gods of song.

Yet, led by hollow ghost or beckoning elf
Far from her homestead to the desert bourn,
The vagrant soul returning to herself
Wearily wise, must needs to him return.

To him and to the powers that with him dwell:—
Inflowings that divulged not whence they came;
And that secluded Spirit unknowable,
The mystery we make darker with a name;

The Somewhat which we name but cannot know,
Ev'n as we name a star and only see
His quenchless flashings forth, which ever show
And ever hide him, and which are not he.

II

Poet who sleepest by this wandering wave!
When thou wast born, what birth-gift hadst thou then?
To thee what wealth was that the Immortals gave,
The wealth thou gavest in thy turn to men?

Not Milton's keen, translunar music thine;
Not Shakespeare's cloudless, boundless human view;
Not Shelley's flush of rose on peaks divine;
Nor yet the wizard twilight Coleridge knew.

What hadst thou that could make so large amends
For all thou hadst not and thy peers possessed,
Motion and fire, swift means to radiant ends?—
Thou hadst, for weary feet, the gift of rest.

From Shelley's dazzling glow or thunderous haze,
From Byron's tempest-anger, tempest-mirth,
Men turned to thee and found—not blast and blaze,
Tumult of tottering heavens, but peace on earth.

Nor peace that grows by Lethe, scentless flower,
There in white languors to decline and cease;
But peace whose names are also rapture, power,
Clear sight, and love: for these are parts of peace.

III

I hear it vouched the Muse is with us still;—
If less divinely frenzied than of yore,
In lieu of feelings she has wondrous skill
To simulate emotion felt no more.

Not such the authentic Presence pure, that made
This valley vocal in the great days gone!—
In *his* great days, while yet the springtime played
About him, and the mighty morning shone.

No word-mosaic artificer, he sang
A lofty song of lowly weal and dole.

Right from the heart, right to the heart it sprang,
Or from the soul leapt instant to the soul.

He felt the charm of childhood, grace of youth,
Grandeur of age, insisting to be sung.
The impassioned argument was simple truth
Half-wondering at its own melodious tongue.

Impassioned? aye, to the song's ecstatic core!
But far removed were clangor, storm and feud;
For plenteous health was his, exceeding store
Of joy, and an impassioned quietude.

IV

A hundred years ere he to manhood came,
Song from celestial heights had wandered down,
Put off her robe of sunlight, dew and flame,
And donned a modish dress to charm the Town.[1]

Thenceforth she but festooned the porch of things;
Apt at life's lore, incurious what life meant.
Dextrous of hand, she struck her lute's few strings;
Ignobly perfect, barrenly content.

Unflushed with ardor and unblanched with awe,
Her lips in profitless derision curled,
She saw with dull emotion—if she saw—
The vision of the glory of the world.

The human mask she watched, with dreamless eyes
In whose clear shallows lurked no trembling shade:
The stars, unkenned by her, might set and rise,
Unmarked by her, the daisies bloom and fade.

The age grew sated with her sterile wit.
Herself waxed weary on her loveless throne.
Men felt life's tide, the sweep and surge of it,
And craved a living voice, a natural tone.

For none the less, though song was but half true,
The world lay common, one abounding theme.
Man joyed and wept, and fate was ever new,
And love was sweet, life real, death no dream.

In sad, stern verse the rugged scholar-sage[2]
Bemoaned his toil unvalued, youth uncheered.
His numbers wore the vesture of the age,
But 'neath it beating, the great heart was heard.

From dewy pastured, uplands sweet with thyme,
A virgin breeze freshened the jaded day.
It wafted Collins' lonely vesper-chime,
It breathed abroad the frugal note of Gray.

It fluttered here and there, nor swept in vain
The dusty haunts where futile echoes dwell,—

[1] He now surveys the preceding century in English poetry beginning with the age of Pope.

[2] Dr. Johnson.

Then, in a cadence soft as summer rain,
And sad from Auburn voiceless, drooped and fell.[1]

It dropped and fell, and one 'neath northern skies,[2]
With southern heart, who tilled his father's field,
Found Poesy a-dying, bade her rise
And touch quick Nature's hem and go forth healed.

On life's broad plain the plowman's conquering share
Upturned the fallow lands of truth anew,
And o'er the formal garden's trim parterre
The peasant's team a ruthless furrow drew.

Bright was his going forth, but clouds ere long
Whelmed him; in gloom his radiance set, and those
Twin morning stars of the new century's song,[3]
Those morning stars that sang together, rose.

In elvish speech the *Dreamer* told his tale
Of marvelous oceans swept by fateful wings.—
The *Seër* strayed not far from earth's human pale,
But the mysterious face of common things

He mirrored as the moon in Rydal Mere
Is mirrored, when the breathless night hangs blue:
Strangely remote she seems and wondrous near,
And by some nameless difference born anew.

[1] The reference is to Goldsmith.
[2] Coleridge and Wordsworth.
[3] Burns.

V

Peace—peace—and rest! Ah, how the lyre is loth,
Or powerless now, to give what all men seek!
Either it deadens with ignoble sloth
Or deafens with shrill tumult, loudly weak.

Where is the singer whose large notes and clear
Can heal, and arm, and plenish, and sustain?
Lo, one with empty music floods the ear,
And one, the heart refreshing, tires the brain.

And idly tuneful, the loquacious throng
Flutter and twitter, prodigal of time,
And little masters make a toy of song
Till grave men weary of the sound of rhyme.

And some go prankt in faded antique dress,
Abhorring to be hale and glad and free;
And some parade a conscious naturalness,
The scholar's not the child's simplicity.

Enough;—and wisest who from words forbear.
The gentle river rails not as it glides;
And suave and charitable, the winsome air
Chides not at all, or only him who chides.

VI

Nature! we storm thine ear with choric notes.
Thou answerest through the calm great nights and days,
"Laud me who will: not tuneless are your throats;
Yet if ye paused I should not miss the praise."

We falter, half-rebuked, and sing again.
We chant thy desertness and haggard gloom,
Or with thy splendid wrath inflate the strain,
Or touch it with thy color and perfume.

One, his melodious blood aflame for thee,
Wooed with fierce lust, his hot heart world-defiled.
One, with the upward eye of infancy,
Looked in thy face, and felt himself thy child.

Thee he approached without distrust or dread—
Beheld thee throned, an awful queen, above—
Climbed to thy lap and merely laid his head
Against thy warm wild heart of mother-love.

He heard that vast heart beating—thou didst press
Thy child so close, and lov'dst him unaware.
Thy beauty gladdened him; yet he scarce less
Had loved thee, had he never found thee fair!

For thou wast not as legendary lands
To which with curious eyes and ears we roam.
Nor wast thou as a fane 'mid solemn sands,
Where palmers halt at evening. Thou wast home.

And here, at home, still bides he; but he sleeps;
Not to be wakened even at thy word;
Though we, vague dreamers, dream he somewhere keeps
An ear still open to thy voice still heard,—
Thy voice, as heretofore, about him blown;
For ever blown about his silence now;
Thy voice, though deeper, yet so like his own
That almost, when he sang, we deemed 'twas thou!

VII

Behind Helm Crag and Silver Howe the sheen
Of the retreating day is less and less.
Soon will the lordlier summits, here unseen,
Gather the night about their nakedness.

The half-heard bleat of sheep comes from the hill.
Faint sounds of childish play are in the air.
The river murmurs past. All else is still.
The very graves seem stiller than they were.

Afar though nation be on nation hurled,
And life with toil and ancient pain depressed,
Here one may scarce believe the whole wide world
Is not at peace, and all man's heart at rest.

Rest! 'twas the gift *he* gave; and peace! the shade
He spread, for spirits fevered with the sun.
To him his bounties are come back—here laid
In rest, in peace, his labor nobly done.

OSCAR WILDE (1856–1900)

REQUIESCAT

Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow;

Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast;
I vex my heart alone,
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet;
All my life's buried here,
Heap earth upon it.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
(1865–)

THE ROSE OF THE WORLD [1]

Who dreamed that beauty passes like a dream?
For these red lips, with all their mournful pride,
Mournful that no new wonder may betide,
Troy passed away in one high funeral gleam,
And Usna's children died.

We and the laboring world are passing by:
Amid men's souls, that waver and give place,
Like the pale waters in their wintry race,
Under the passing stars, foam of the sky,
Lives on this lonely face.

Bow down, archangels, in your dim abode:
Before you were, or any hearts to beat,
Weary and kind one lingered by His seat;
He made the world to be a grassy road
Before her wandering feet.

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake-water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

[1] The following two poems are reprinted by permission from *The Poetical Works of William B. Yeats*, copyright 1906 by The Macmillan Company.

CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE POETRY

In 1908 John Millington Synge, in a preface of great significance, said, "The strong things of life are needed in poetry . . . to show that what is exalted or tender is not made by feeble blood." And he added in words that have since become famous, "before verse can be human again it must learn to be brutal." This protest against the more "literary" and academic in poetry, both in subject and treatment, is only another evidence of the reaction against the poetic conventions of the preceding age. But it points to one of the most significant developments in recent literature.

> Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
> The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth;—
> Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and the scum of the earth.

So wrote John Masefield, and in 1911 he published *The Everlasting Mercy*, quickly followed by *The Widow in the Bye Street* (1912), *Dauber* (1912), and *The Daffodil Fields* (1913). These four remarkable narrative poems startled the world with their themes of sailors, drunken men and the like, and their portrayal of the sordid and brutal in unexpectedly colloquial language. Yet even before this, W. W. Gibson had published *The Stonefolds* (1907) and *Daily Bread* (1910), each a series of short narrative poems portraying dramatic moments in the lives of common men, and W. E. Henley over ten years before had written of bus drivers, orderlies, scrub-women, and the slums. T. E. Brown was portraying scenes and characters among the peasantry of the Isle of Man, and Kipling had put into poetry the British soldier in India. It is evident that poetry has spread into new fields and has enlarged its scope to include subjects formerly thought unpoetical. This insistence on realism, interest in poverty, and emphasis upon the ugly, the rude, and the repulsive as essential facts of life, must be considered one of the outstanding contributions to literature made by the narrative poetry of today.

It must not be thought, however, that recent poetry has but this one string to its narrative bow. As in the lyric, it is rich and varied, ranging in matter from the romantic themes of Alfred Noyes to the stories of medieval romance and classical legend represented in the following pages by Laurence Binyon and T. Sturge Moore. But whatever the subject, the treatment is marked by directness and simplicity, concreteness and dramatic force, that suggest the vigor of life.

LAURENCE BINYON (1869–)

TRISTRAM'S END

I

Tristram lies sick to death;
Dulled is his kingly eye,
Listless his famed right arm: earth-weary breath
Hath force alone to sigh
The one name that re-kindles life's low flame,
Isoult!—And thou, fair moon of Tristram's eve,
Who with that many-memoried name didst take
A glory for the sake
Of her who shone the sole light of his days and deeds,
Thou canst no more relieve
This heart that inly bleeds
With all thy love, with all thy tender lore,
No, nor thy white hands soothe him any more.
Still, the day long, she hears
Kind words that are more sharp to her than spears.
Ah, loved he more, he had not been so kind!
And still with pricking tears
She watches him, and still must seem resigned;
Though well she knows what face his eyes require,
And jealous pangs, like coiled snakes in her mind,
Cling tighter, as that voice more earnestly
Asks heavy with desire
From out that passionate past which is not hers,
"Sweet wife, is there no sail upon the sea?"

Tenderest hearts by pain grow oft the bitterest,
And haste to wound the thing they love the best.
At evening, at sun-set, to Tristram's bed
News on her lip she brings!
She comes with eyes bright in divining dread,
Hardening her anguished heart she bends above his head.
"O Tristram!"—How her low voice strangely rings!—
"There comes a ship, ah, rise not, turn not pale.
I know not what this means, it is a sail
Black, black as night!" She shot her word, and fled.
But Tristram cried
With a great cry, and rose upon his side.
"It cannot be, it cannot, shall not be!
I will not die until mine own eyes see."
Despair, more strong than hope, lifts his weak limbs;
He stands and draws deep effort from his breath,
He trembles, his gaze swims,
He gropes his steps in pain,
Nigh fainting, till he gain
Salt air and brightness from the outer door
That opens on the cliff-built bastion floor
And the wide ocean gleaming far beneath.
He gazes, his lips part,
And all the blood pours back upon his heart.

Close thine eyes, Tristram, lest joy blind thee quite!
So swift a splendor burns away thy doubt.
Nay, Tristram, gaze, gaze, lest bright Truth go out
Ere she hath briefly shone.
White, dazzling white,
A sail swells onward, filling all his sight
With snowy light!
As on a gull's sure wing the ship comes on;
She towers upon the wave, she speeds for home.
Tristram on either doorpost must sustain
His arms for strength to gaze his fill again.

She shivers off the wind; the shining foam
Bursts from her pitching prow,
The sail drops as she nears,
Poised on the joyous swell; and Tristram sees
The mariners upon the deck; he hears
Their eager cries; the breeze
Blows a blue cloak; and now
Like magic brought to his divining ears,
A voice, that empties all the earth and sky,
Comes clear across the water, "It is I!"

Isoult is come! Victorious saints above,
Who suffered anguish ere to bliss you died,
Have pity on him whom Love so sore hath tried,
Who sinned yet greatly suffered for his love.
That dear renouncèd love when now he sees,
Heavy with joy, he sinks upon his knees.
O had she wings to lift her to his side!
But she is far below
Where the spray breaks upon the rusted rail
And rock-hewn steps, and there
Stands gazing up, and lo!
Tristram, how faint and pale!
A pity overcomes her like despair.
How shall her strength avail
To conquer that steep stair,
Dark, terrible, and ignorant as Time,
Up which her feet must climb
To Tristram? His outstretching arms are fain
To help her, yet are helpless; and his pain
Is hers, and her pain Tristram's; with long sighs
She mounts, then halts again,
Till she have drawn strength from his love-dimmed eyes:
But when that wasted face anew she sees,
Despair anew subdues her knees;
She fails, yet still she mounts by sad degrees,
With all her soul into her gaze upcast,
Until at last, at last . . .
What tears are like the wondering tears
Of that entranced embrace,
When out of desolate and divided years
Face meets belovèd face?
What cry most exquisite of grief or bliss
The too full heart shall tell,
When the new-recovered kiss
Is the kiss of last farewell?

II

Isoult

O Tristram, is this true?
Is it thou I see
With my own eyes, clasp in my arms? I knew,
I knew that this must be.
Thou couldst not suffer so,
And I not feel the smart,
Far, far away. But oh,
How pale, my love, thou art!

Tristram

'Tis I, Isoult, 'tis I
That thee enfold.
I have seen thee, my own life, and yet I die.
O for my strength of old!
O that thy love could heal
This wound that conquers me!
But the night is come, I feel,
And the last sun set for me.

Isoult

Tristram, 'twas I that healed thy hurt,
That old, fierce wound of Morolt's poisoned sword.
Stricken to death, pale, pale as now thou wert:
Yet was thy strength restored.

Have I forgot my skill?
This wound shall yet be healed.
Love shall be master still,
And Death again shall yield!

Tristram

Isoult, if Time could bring me back
That eve, that first eve, and that Irish shore,
Then should I fear not, no nor nothing lack,
And life were mine once more.
But now too late thou art come;
Too long we have dwelt apart;
I have pined in an alien home:
This new joy bursts my heart.

Isoult

Hark, Tristram, to the breaking sea!
So sounded the dim waves, at such an hour
On such an eve, when thy voice came to me
First in my father's tower.
I heard thy sad harp from the shore beneath,
It stirred my soul from sleep.
Then it was bliss to breathe;
But now, but now, I weep.

Tristram

Shipwrecked, without hope, without friend, alone
On a strange shore, stricken with pang on pang,
I stood sad-hearted by that tower unknown,
Yet soon for joy I sang.
For could I see thee and on death believe?
Ah, glad would I die to attain
The beat of my heart, that eve,
And the song in my mouth again!

Isoult

Young was I then and fair,
Thou too wast fair and young;
How comely the brown hair
Down on thy shoulder hung!
O Tristram, all grows dark as then it grew,
But still I see thee on that surge-beat shore;
Thou camest, and all was new
And changed for evermore.

Tristram

Isoult, dost thou regret?
Behold my wasted cheek,
With salt tears it is wet,
My arms how faint, how weak!
And thou, since that far day, what hast thou seen
Save strife, and tears, and failure, and dismay?
Had that hour never been,
Peace had been thine, this day.

Isoult

Look, Tristram, in my eyes!
My own love, I could feed
Life well with miseries
So thou wert mine indeed.
Proud were the tears I wept;
That day, that hour I bless,
Now would for peace accept
One single pain the less.

Tristram

Isoult, my heart is rent.
What pangs our bliss hath bought!
Only joy we meant,
Yet woe and wrong we have wrought.
I vowed a vow in the dark,
And thee, who wert mine, I gave
For a word's sake, to King Mark!
Words, words have digged our grave.

Isoult

Tristram, despite thy love,
King Mark had yet thine oath.
Ah, surely thy heart strove
How to be true to both.
Blame not thyself! for woe
'Twixt us was doomed to be.
Only one thing I know;
Thou hast been true to me.

Tristram

Accurst be still that day,
When lightly I vowed the king
Whatever he might pray
Home to his hands I'd bring!
Thee, thee he asked! and I
Who never feared man's sword,
Yielded my life to a lie,
To save the truth of a word.

Isoult

Think not of that day, think
Of the day when our lips desired,
Unknowing, that cup to drink!
The cup with a charm was fired
From thee to beguile my love:
But now in my soul it must burn
For ever, nor turn, nor remove,
Till the sun in his course shall turn.

Tristram

Or ever that draught we drank,
Thy heart, Isoult, was mine,
My heart was thine. I thank
God's grace, no wizard wine,
No stealth of a drop distilled
By a spell in the night, no art,
No charm, could have ever filled
With aught but thee my heart.

Isoult

When last we said farewell,
Remember how we dreamed
Wild love to have learned to quell;
Our hearts grown wise we deemed.
Tender, parted friends
We vowed to be; but the will
Of Love meant other ends.
Words fool us, Tristram, still.

Tristram

Not now, Isoult, not now!
I am thine while I have breath.
Words part us not, nor vow—
No, nor King Mark, but death.
I hold thee to my breast.
Our sins, our woes are past;
Thy lips were the first I prest,
Thou art mine, thou art mine at the last!

Isoult

O Tristram, all grows old,
Enfold me closer yet!
The night grows vast and cold,
And the dew on thy hair falls wet.
And never shall Time rebuild
The places of our delight;
Those towers and gardens are filled
With emptiness now, and night!

Tristram

Isoult, let it all be a dream,
Those days and those deeds, let them be
As the bough that I cast on the stream
And that lived but to bring thee to me;
As the leaves that I broke from the bough
To float by thy window, and say
That I waited thy coming—O now
Thou art come, let the world be as they!

Isoult

How dark is the strong waves' sound!
Tristram, they fill me with fear!
We two are but spent waves, drowned
In the coming of year upon year.

Long dead are our friends and our foes,
Old Rual, Brangian, all
That helped us, or wrought us woes;
And we, the last, we fall.

Tristram

God and his great saints guard
True friends that loved us well,
And all false foes be barred
In the fiery gates of hell.
But broken be all those towers,
And sunken be all those ships!
Shut out those old, dead hours;
Life, life, is on thy lips!

Isoult

Tristram, my soul is afraid!

Tristram

Isoult, Isoult, thy kiss!
To sorrow though I was made,
I die in bliss, in bliss.

Isoult

Tristram, my heart must break.
O leave me not in the grave
Of the dark world! Me too take!
Save me, O Tristram, save!

III

Calm, calm the moving waters all the night
On to that shore roll slow,
Fade into foam against the cliff's dim height,
And fall in a soft thunder, and upsurge
Forever out of unexhausted might,
Lifting their voice below
Tuned to no human dirge;
Nor from their majesty of music bend
To wail for beauty's end
Or towering spirit's most fiery overthrow;
Nor tarrieth the dawn, though she unveil
To weeping eyes their woe,
The dawn that doth not know
What the dark night hath wrought,
And over the far wave comes pacing pale,
Of all that she reveals regarding nought.—
But ere the dawn there comes a faltering tread;
Isoult, the young wife, stealing from her bed,
Sleepless with dread,
Creeps by still wall and blinded corridor,
Till from afar the salt scent of the air
Blows on her brow; and now
In that pale space beyond the open door
What mute, clasped shadow dulls her to despair
By keen degrees aware
That with the dawn her widowhood is there?

Is it wild envy or remorseful fear
Transfixes her young heart, unused to woe,
Crying to meet wrath, hatred, any foe,
Not silence drear!
Not to be vanquished so
By silence on the lips that were so dear!
Ah, sharpest stab! it is another face
That leans to Tristram's piteous embrace,
Another face she knows not, yet knows well,
Whose hands are clasped about his helpless head,
Propping it where it fell
In a vain tenderness,
But dead,—her great dream-hated rival dead,
Invulnerably dead,
Dead as her love, and cold,
And on her heart a grief heavy as stone is rolled.
She bows down, stricken in accusing pain,
And love, long-baffled, surges back again
Over her heart; she wails a shuddering cry,
While the tears blindly rain,

"I, I have killed him, I that loved him, I
That for his dear sake had been glad to die.
I loved him not enough, I could not keep
His heart, and yet I loved him, O how deep!
I cannot touch him. Will none set him free
From those, those other arms and give him me?
Alas, I may not vex him from that sleep.
He is thine in the end, thou proud one, he is thine,
Not mine, not mine!
I loved him not enough, I could not hold
My tongue from stabbing, and forsook him there.
I had not any care
To keep him from the darkness and the cold.
O all my wretched servants, where were ye?
Hath none in my house tended him but she?
Where are ye now? Can ye not hear my call?
Come hither, laggards all!
Nay, hush not so affrighted, nor so stare
Upon your lord; tis he!
Put out your torches, for the dawn grows clear.
And set me out within the hall a bier,
And wedding robes, the costliest that are
In all my house, prepare,
And lay upon the silks these princely dead,
And bid the sailors take that funeral bed
And set it in the ship, and put to sea,
And north to Cornwall steer.
Farewell, my lord, thy home is far from here.
Farewell, my great love, dead and doubly dear!
Carry him hence, proud queen, for he is thine,
Not mine, not mine, not mine!"

Within Tintagel walls King Mark awaits his queen.
The south wind blows, surely she comes to-day!
No light hath his eye seen
Since she is gone, no pleasure; he grows gray;
His knights apart make merry and wassail,
With dice and chessboard, hound at knee, they play;
But he sits solitary all the day,
Thinking of what hath been.
And now through all the castle rings a wail;
The king arises; all his knights are dumb;
The queen, the queen is come.
Not as she came of old,
Sweeping with gesture proud
To meet her wronged lord, royally arrayed,
And music ushered her, and tongues were stayed,
And all hearts beat, her beauty to behold;
But mute she comes and cold,
Borne on a bier, appareled in a shroud,
Daisies about her sprinkled; and now bowed
Is her lord's head; and hushing upon all
Thoughts of sorrow fall,
As the snow softly, without any word;
And every breast is stirred
With wonder in its weeping;
For by her sleeping side,
In that long sleep no morning shall divide,
Is Tristram sleeping;
Tristram who wept farewell, and fled, and swore
That he would clasp his dear love never more,
And sailed far over sea
Far from his bliss and shame,
And dreamed to die at peace in Brittany
And to uncloud at last the glory of his name.

Yet lo, with fingers clasping both are come,
Come again home
In all men's sight, as when of old they came,
And Tristram led Isoult, another's bride,
True to his vow, but to his heart untrue,
And silver trumpets blew
To greet them stepping o'er the flower-strewn floor,
And King Mark smiled upon them, and men cried
On Tristram's name anew,
Tristram, the king's strong champion and great pride.

Silently gazing long
On them that wrought him wrong,
Still stands the stricken king, and to his eyes
Such tears as old men weep, yet shed not, rise:
Lifting his head at last, as from a trance, he sighs.
"Beautiful ever, O Isoult, wast thou,
And beautiful art thou now,
Though never again shall I, reproaching thee,
Make thy proud head more beautiful to me;
But this is the last reproach, and this the last
Forgiveness that thou hast.
Lost is the lost, Isoult, and past the past!
O Tristram, no more shalt thou need to hide
Thy thought from my thought, sitting at my side,
Nor need to wrestle sore
With thy great love and with thy fixèd oath,
For now Death leaves thee loyal unto both,
Even as thou wouldst have been, for evermore.
Now, after all thy pain, thy brow looks glad;
But I lack all things that I ever had,
My wife, my friend, yea, even my jealous rage;
And empty is the house of my old age.
Behold, I have labored all my days to part
These two, that were the dearest to my heart.
Isoult, I would have fenced thee from men's sight,
My treasure, that I found so very fair,
The treasure I had taken with a snare:
To keep thee mine, this was my life's delight.
And now the end is come, alone I stand,
And the hand that lies in thine is not my hand."

T. E. BROWN (1830–1897)

PEGGY'S WEDDING

"Is that you, Peggy? my goodness me!
And so dark still I can hardly see!
Wait, woman, wait!
I'll come down; ye needn' go on hommerin' at such a rate.
Here's the master snorin'
Like a mill, and you to be breakin' the door in—
It's just disthractin', that's what it is—
Aisy, woman! yis! yis!
There's people'll snore—where's that perricut? [1]
There's people'll hommer—my gough! that slut!
I'm comin'! I'm comin'!
God bless the woman!
I navar heard such a row—

"Aw dear! aw dear! aw, the craythur! aw, poor Peggy, what's the matter with you now?
Come in! come in! the sowl! the sowl!

[1] petticoat

What is it, Peggy, what? and where have you left Dan Cowle?
Is he outside in the street?—well, where is he then?
Did you call at the halfway house? did he get—aw, bless these men!
Did he fall on the road? *No,* ye say, *no?*
Well then where did he go?
Is he lyin' in the ditch?
Did he lave you, or did you lave him—which?
You left *him?*
So I suppose it's not a man you're wantin' at all, but a cherubim?
Aye! aye!
Middlin' high!
"And you that were married only yesterday, and the weddin' out of this house—
To be comin' home in the mornin' all ragg'd and rumpled like a reg'lar trouse—[1]
Peggy, Peggy! *You'd like to blow the fire, just to feel*
You're at home again—eh, Peggy? Don't kneel! don't kneel!
Don't be foolish, Peggy. There! take the bellows,
And blow away!
And we'll have a cup o' tay,
And then you'll tell us.
Why—Dan Cowle! Dan Ballabroo!
A dacent man, and well-to-do!
Dan! Dan Cowle! dear heart!
And the beautiful ye went away in the cart!
And you've tuk and left him! left Dan!
Left the man!"

"*Man!* did ye say? aw Misthriss, Misthriss! what are ye talkin'?
Man! do ye call that craythur a man, because he's a thing that's walkin'
On two legs, and a tongue in his head? a beautiful surt[2]
Of a man—you call him a man, I call him a dirt!
That's what I call him—a dirt, and a sneak, and a dunkey—
Man! if that chap's a man, he's a cross 'twix a man and a monkey!
And a touch of a divil, and a touch of a fool . . .
Listen, Misthriss, listen! We warn' halfway up Barrule,
When I thought he'd ha' stayed a bit—and only raisonable he shud—
At Kinvig's—bein' a thing lek that's general understood—
What's halfway-houses for, I'd like to know—
Just so!
You wouldn' be agen[3] that?
What?

"Certainly! and company waitin'—and just a drop to warm a body—
And dear me! what is there in half a glass of rum, or a whole glass, for the matter of that, to harm a body?
And well you know it isn' the dhrink I regard—
Well you know that—but still a body's hardly prepar'd
To pass the only public-house on the road, drivin' home on your weddin' night—
It isn' right,
Nor correck, nor friendly, nor in any surt of a concatenation
Lek accordin' to your station—
And disappintin' people that way, when they're trustin'
Your proper feelin's, is quite disgustin'.

"So I lays my hand on his arm, just by way of signifyin'—
Nothin' more—and behould ye! he cocks hisself up as stiff and as dignifyin',
And rip! and rup! and chip! and chup!

[1] slattern [2] sort [3] against

And 'There's nobody up,' he says. Nobody up?
And glasses jinglin', and windows blazin',
And people comin' out, and shoutin' amazin'
To stop! But no! but sticks his elbers like skewers in a body—
'What!' I says, 'not a glass of toddy?
Just for neighborly dacency?'
'It's surprisin' how early they're goin' to bed,' says he.
'Goin' to bed!' says I. 'Yes,' he says—middlin' snarly—
'Kinvigs's was allis early,' he says, 'partic'lar early'—
And his ould hoss gallopin', and heisin' his hind-quarters, and workin'
Like a see-saw, and bumpin' and jerkin',
And sent me flyin', with my head in the bottom of the cart, and my feet in the air,
And the rest of me—anywhere.

"So he puts out his hand—
'Bless my sowl!' he says, 'I thought it was gone!'
'What?' says I. 'The box,' he says, maenin' my box, and my weddin' bonnet
Smashed to jammy—'I wish you'd sit upon it,'
He says—the box, of coorse! So I thought I'd be a little lovin'
And that—and I comes up lek gradjal, lek shiftin' and shovin'
Lek agen him in a way. And I says, 'I'd like to be with you,' says I,
'My own husband,' I says; for I thought it better to try
Was there just a taste
Of anything of a husband in him. So he put his arm round my waist—
Not round either—for he couldn' do that—
Not for the stout I am, bein' allis a gintale figger, but just like a lath—
Flat
Agen the back o' my stays, and not the smallest curl
Or squeeze in the ould pump-handle, not the smallest in the worl'—
And his eyes on the box—and 'There it's goin'!'
He says, and waein' and woin'—
And as restless! And then we got on the mountain; and the ling
Was smellin' very sweet in the dark, and a stream began ting-ting-ting
Down the other way—very pleasant, and it got couldher,
And I thought it was only a 'spectable thing to put my head on his shouldher.

"O dear! he got as crabbit
As an ould buck rabbit;
And he hitched and he hunched, and he cribbed and he crunched,
Till he was all bunched
In a lump; and anyway his blades that sharp
And snaggy you might as well ha' leaned your head on the backbone of a carp.

"So I didn't care, and I sat up as straight
And as indepandin'. It was gettin' late
When we come to his house; and there was a falla theer standin' on the look-out
On the very top of the midden, and jumps down, and grips the hoss, and gives a big shout,
And 'Look here!' he says, 'who's goin' to pay me?' 'Pay!'
Thinks I—and this ould fool goin' seerchin' away
In all his pockets—and gev a start,
And 'Bless my heart!'

He says, 'hev I lost it? hev I lost it?' and twisses and wriggles
Hisself into knots—and the other chap stands and sniggles—

A young chap—and 'Dear me!' says Dan,
'it must ha' dropt out on the road comin'—
It's very disthressin',' he says. 'Faith then! you're a rummin,'
Says the chap, and like to buss—[1]
'What's the use o' talkin'?' says Dan Cowle, 'I've lost my puss.
Where's your puss, Peggy? maybe,' he says, 'you'll not mind
Payin' the man,' he says—'if you'll be so kind,'
He says—but oh! that creepin', and that sneakin', and that slewin', and that screwin',
Like a conger just. And 'What's a doin'?'
Says I; 'isn't it your own cart you got?'
'Well—no—it's not,'
He says, 'I must confess—
The fact of the matter is,' he says,
'My own cart is bruk very bad,
And I borrowed this one for the occasion.' So I paid the lad.

"'Aye, aye! his cart is bruk very bad,' says the chap,
'Likewise his trap,
And the phaeton, and the barooch, and the jantin'-car, and the family coach-and-four'—
And he gev a roor
Out of hisself, this young divil—
And 'Hurrah for the weddiners!' he says. 'Be civil! be civil!'
Says Dan, 'be civil, young man, it would well become ye'—
But says I—'Take your money and your cart,' I says, 'and be off with ye, ye scum ye!
Be off!' I says, 'stir your stumps!'
(These Foxdale lumps [2]
Is pirriful.[3]) And Dan with the box on the street, and pokin'
The key in the door—and, you know, I seen the chimbley wasn' smokin',
Nor nothin'—nor no cowhouse about that I could see,
Nor no garden, nor a bush, let alone a tree—
But just a crock
Standin' on a rock,
And water runn' in it very free
At the gable, and slishin' and slushin', and muckin' the street
Under one's feet.

"And this is the man that tould me he'd make me
So comfible!
But still
You'll not mistake me,
You know me, Misthriss, don't ye? and you know I wouldn' flinch,
No, not even if I was deceived—no, not an inch!
On I'd go, through the smooth and the rough,
Content enough—
For richer for poorer, for better for wuss—
Lost his puss!
Had he? lost two! lost twenty!
Give me a man with a lovin' heart, Misthriss, with a lovin' heart—
That's plenty—
Plenty for me—navar mind the cart—
With a lovin' heart, and some wit about him—
And I'd navar doubt him,
Misthriss—no! *For better for wuss—*
Them's the words, and didn' the Pazon say them? And I'd nuss
His childher, and I'd work, and I'd slave, and I'd die
Before I'd be beat—and still a lie
Is a dirty thing—fore or aft,
As the sailors is sayin'—
But listen again—
Misthriss! Misthriss! you don't know half.

[1] burst
[2] lads
[3] pitiful, detestable

"So we got in, however, and he groped about, and he found a flint-and-steel,
And he skinned his ould knuckles all like a priddha [1] peel,
Streck-streckin' away; and, when he gor [2] a light at last,
You navar seen such a rookery. A dresser there was—
Yis—but hardly a plate or a bason, or any other surt o' war',
And a hape of mouldy turmits [3] in a corner there—could, comfortless things they are—
And a rot-hole,[4] or a shot-hole, I don't know which, and I don't care etha',[5]
And a barrel that looked like male, with a flag or a slate on the top of it, and a medha,[6]
And a pot, and nothin' in it, and no fire, if there had been, and as for bed or beddin'—
Well, I dedn' trouble, no, faith, I dedn'.

"It was a house that if you were inside you'd see about as much sky as roof,
A surt o' mixthar o' the two, and a touch of harry-long-legses and spiders—aw, it's the troof! [7] it's the troof,
The troof I'm tellin'! And the scraas [8] hangin' in rags and strings of dirt as black
You couldn' tell were they scraas, or strips tore from a rotten ould sack,
Or nettin' or somethin'. And I can tell ye the chap begun, as a body might say,
To look rather ashamed of hisself—I think so—in a way—
Yis—he didn' look at me for a bit at all,
But cocked his face agen the wall.

"And—'It's too late,' he says, 'it's too late for supper, I suppose'—
And ye might have sniffed and sniffed till ye straint your nose
Afore you'd ha' got a smell of supper in yandhar place—
But he turned at last, and I saw his face—
Workin', workin', workin', most terrible,
And screwin' the eye, and workin' still—
And—'Let's sit down a bit,' he says, and he studdied the candle, if ye plaze, and he looks up as innocent as a linnet,
And he says, 'That's a nice puss you've got,' he says; 'how much is there in it?'
And I tould him £4: 16s. and 2½d. farlin'—
So he says, 'That's a nice little bit o' money, my darlin'—
Let's see it,' he says.
So I gev it to him, ye know;
And he counted it out, I tell ye, every coin of it, very slow—
Very slow he counted—and then—what d'ye think?
Whips it in his pocket! 'A nice lump of jink!'
Says Dan; and he snuggled up closer to me, and he began to fiddle and fiddle,
Lek tryin' to span me round the middle—
Some surt o' coortin'? thinks I, *he's improvin', I doubt—*
The ould villyan! He was just tryin' to find out
Had I any more stitched up in my stays!
And a man with such ways—
Would you call him a man? now would ye, Misthriss? would ye, though?
That was the fiddlin'—aye! he said it, he said it hisself, the ould crow!
Yis, and his dirty ould mouth all of a pucker, and grippin' and nippin',
And declarin' he felt the shillin's slippin'

[1] potato
[2] got
[3] turnips
[4] rat-hole
[5] either
[6] small, one-handled tub
[7] truth
[8] strips of sod laid on the rafters under the thatch

Between the quiltin's—aw dear! aw dear!
But I was enough for him—navar fear!

"I says—'This is no place for me,' I says; and up I jumps—
'I'm off,' I says; and he rattles his ould stumps—
And—'Off?' he says—'Why you've not opened your box yet!'
'Clear out o' the road!' I says. 'I hevn' seen your frocks yet,'
He says, 'nor the sheetin' nor nothin'! just give us that key—
It's every bit my proppity!' he says. 'Out o' the way!'
I says, and I gript the box. But if I gript it, he gript it, and he shouted and bawled,
And backards and forrards we tugged and we hauled;
And we staggered this way, and we staggered that way,
And higgledy-piggledy, and I cannot tell what way—
But I gev him a run in on the dresser, and his ould back bent,
And—down he went!

"And the crockery—what there was—all smashed—well to be sure!
And the turmits rowlin' on the floor—
So the box was mine, and I out on the door.
'Murdher! tieves!' and he run after me full trot—
'You're a robber!' he says; 'you've robbed me! everything you got
Belongs to me—I'll bring a shuit,' he says; 'I'll bring a shuit
For damagers!' he says—the ould brute—
'I'll have your life!' he says,
'Ar'n' you my wife?' he says—
'Murdher!' he says, 'murdher!'—
'*Murdher*—your granny,'
I says—'Good-bye, Dan Cowle! good-bye, Danny!'
And I left him standin' in the road; and here I am, as you see—
And, Misthriss! no more weddin's, aw good sakes! no, no more weddin's for me!"

JOSEPH CAMPBELL (1881–)

THE HORSE-BREAKER

A good nag knows the sinewy grip
That rides him without spur or whip,—
And Bat Muldowney knows his mind.
Here's at you, Bat! I love your kind:
The clean-jawed man with fearless eyes:
Yourself as worthy of a prize
As what you break. To-day I spied
Him cantering by the Anner side,
And "Christ!" says I, "but there's a man,
And there's a horse." Bat lightly ran
The chaser round with hand and knee,
Keeping him at a jump; till he,
Weary of dyke, or post and rail,
Showed temper, jibbed, stood on his tail,
And, if he could, would throw Bat. No;
By Christ! Good nags have got to go
Where good men ride them. At the sticks
Bat faces him again. He kicks,
As Irish blood will kick, head down;
But all the horses, bay and brown,
Were they to plunge till Judgment Day,
Could not put Bartle off his way.
"Woa, beauty. Up!" . . . and at one stride
The chaser's found the other side.
For good nags know the sinewy grip
That rides them without spur or whip,—
And Bat Muldowney knows his mind.
Here's at you, Bat! I love your kind.

THE NEWSPAPER-SELLER

(*Times Square, New York, about two o'clock on a winter's morning.*)

And how is Cabey's Lane?
I'm forty years left Ennis, sir,

And never like to see the place again.
'Twas out of there I married her—
The first one—Mattha Twomey's daughter.
The "bit o' paint," they called her.
She was young, tall as a birch-tree, pale,
With blushes in her cheeks,
And eyes as brown as Burren water.
Faith, and there was lavish drinking
At her wedding. Now, as I'm thinking—
Four half-barrels of ale,
Old whisky, cordial and wine;
And eating fine.

I'd ten by her:
Ten topping childer, sir,
Like apples, red and sweet.
In fair-meadow or street
You wouldn't see the likes of 'em . . .
And then she died.

You can't live by the dead,
Leastways, when you have hungry mouths to fill
That's what my people said.
And so inside a year I wed again—
This time, to Mary Quill,
A Limerick girl was lodging in the lane
West of Cabey's. The first was quiet and wise,
The second had laughing eyes:
I put a charm on them, and married her.

Says she on the wedding night,
"You're in a sorry plight
With me and the little ones. Let's go away."
"Where to?" says I. "To America,"
Says she. "This country is too poor and small
For us, and over there there's work and bread for all."

She was an eager kind, you see—
Far different to Sibby.
Well, by dint of slaving night and day
We made the passage out, and Boston Quay
Saw me and her in Eighteen Seventy-Three,
The Blizzard Year. That's four decades ago;
But even now I feel the bitter snow—
I feel it in my marrow, sir—the snow
And the high, driving wind.
We left our clan behind
In Cabey's Lane with neighbors
Till such times as I could find
The cash to fetch 'em after us.
And God was kind—
Kinder than I thought He'd be
In a strange land.
For work came rolling to my hand, sir,
And I wrought for constant pay
In a bakehouse. He was German, sir,
The boss; and Germans, mostly, mixed the dough,
And watched the fires. That's how I came to know
The Deutsch. I speak it better than I used to do
The Gaelic at home.

I'd twelve by Mary, sir—
Ten living and two dead.
I'd ten by Sibby. Twenty childer, sir—
Twelve daughters and eight sons . . .
And better for myself I ne'er had one!

My curse on Matt and Ned
That let old age come down on my gray head,
And left me selling *"Worlds!"*
My curse on Shaun!
My curse on Meehaul Ban,
The fair-haired boy, the gentleman,
That wouldn't look the road I doddered on!
My seven curses on him,
And the flaming curse of God!
My curse on Peter!
My blessing on poor Joe, who's now in quod
For housebreaking—the white lamb of the flock.

He helped me when my right hand was a crock
With blood-poison, and paid the rent for me.
My curse on all my daughters!
On Sibby Ann, who's married west,
And has her auto, while I creep on limbs
All crookened with the pains!
My curse on Peg and Fan!
My curse on Angeline!
My curse on Ceely, and the rest!
I don't know half their names:
The devil's brood, but no brood of mine.

And Cabey's Lane, sir? I was happy there,
In Ennis town in Clare,
When I was young. Ah, young, not old . . .
God help us, isn't it bitter cold!

JOHN DAVIDSON (1857–1909)

A BALLAD OF HEAVEN

He wrought at one great work for years;
The world passed by with lofty look:
Sometimes his eyes were dashed with tears;
Sometimes his lips with laughter shook.

His wife and child went clothed in rags,
And in a windy garret starved:
He trod his measures on the flags,
And high on heaven his music carved.

Wistful he grew but never feared;
For always on the midnight skies
His rich orchestral score appeared
In stars and zones and galaxies.

He thought to copy down his score:
The moonlight was his lamp: he said,
"Listen, my love;" but on the floor
His wife and child were lying dead.

Her hollow eyes were open wide;
He deemed she heard with special zest:
Her death's-head infant coldly eyed
The desert of her shrunken breast.

"Listen, my love: my work is done;
I tremble as I touch the page
To sign the sentence of the sun
And crown the great eternal age.

"The slow adagio begins;
The winding-sheets are raveled out
That swathe the minds of men, the sins
That wrap their rotting souls about.

"The dead are heralded along;
With silver trumps and golden drums,
And flutes and oboes, keen and strong,
My brave andante singing comes.

"Then like a python's sumptuous dress
The frame of things is cast away,
And out of Time's obscure distress,
The thundering scherzo crashes Day.

"For three great orchestras I hope
My mighty music shall be scored:
On three high hills they shall have scope
With heaven's vault for a sounding-board.

"Sleep well, love; let your eyelids fall;
Cover the child; good night, and if . . .
What? Speak . . . the traitorous end of all!
Both . . . cold and hungry . . . cold and stiff!

"But no, God means us well, I trust:
Dear ones, be happy, hope is nigh:
We are too young to fall to dust,
And too unsatisfied to die."

He lifted up against his breast
The woman's body stark and wan;
And to her withered bosom pressed
The little skin-clad skeleton.

"You see you are alive," he cried.
He rocked them gently to and fro.
"No, no, my love, you have not died;
Nor you, my little fellow; no."

Long in his arms he strained his dead
And crooned an antique lullaby;
Then laid them on the lowly bed,
And broke down with a doleful cry.

"The love, the hope, the blood, the brain,
Of her and me, the budding life,
And my great music—all in vain!
My unscored work, my child, my wife!

"We drop into oblivion,
And nourish some suburban sod:
My work, this woman, this my son,
Are now no more: there is no God.

"The world's a dustbin; we are due,
And death's cart waits: be life accurst!"
He stumbled down beside the two,
And clasping them, his great heart burst.

Straightway he stood at heaven's gate,
Abashed and trembling for his sin:
I trow he had not long to wait,
For God came out and led him in.

And then there ran a radiant pair,
Ruddy with haste and eager-eyed
To meet him first upon the stair—
His wife and child beatified.

They clad him in a robe of light,
And gave him heavenly food to eat;
Great seraphs praised him to the height,
Archangels sat about his feet.

God, smiling, took him by the hand,
And led him to the brink of heaven:
He saw where systems whirling stand,
Where galaxies like snow are driven.

Dead silence reigned; a shudder ran
Through space; Time furled his wearied wings;
A slow adagio then began
Sweetly resolving troubled things.

The dead were heralded along:
As if with drums and trumps of flame,
And flutes and oboes keen and strong,
A brave andante singing came.

Then like a python's sumptuous dress
The frame of things was cast away,
And out of Time's obscure distress
The conquering scherzo thundered Day.

He doubted; but God said "Even so;
Nothing is lost that's wrought with tears:
The music that you made below
Is now the music of the spheres."

A BALLAD OF TANNHÄUSER

"What hardy, tattered wretch is that
Who on our Synod dares intrude?"
Pope Urban with his council sat,
And near the door Tannhäuser stood,

His eye with light unearthly gleamed;
His yellow hair hung round his head
In elf locks lusterless; he seemed
Like one new-risen from the dead.

"Hear me, most Holy Father, tell
The tale that burns my soul within.
I stagger on the brink of hell;
No voice but yours can shrive my sin."

"Speak, sinner." "From my father's house
Lightly I stepped in haste for fame;
And hoped by deeds adventurous
High on the world to carve my name.

"At early dawn I took my way;
My heart with peals of gladness rang;
Nor could I leave the woods all day,
Because the birds so sweetly sang.

"But when the happy birds had gone
To rest, and night with panic fears
And blushes deep came stealing on,
Another music thrilled my ears.

"I heard the evening wind serene,
And all the wandering waters sing
The deep delight the day had been,
The deep delight the night would bring.

"I heard the wayward earth express
In one long-drawn melodious sigh
The rapture of the sun's caress,
The passion of the brooding sky.

"The air, a harp of myriad chords,
Intently murmured overhead;
My heart grew great with unsung words:
I followed where the music led.

"It led me to a mountain-chain,
Wherein athwart the deepening gloom,
High-hung above the wooded plain,
Appeared a summit like a tomb.

"Aloft a giddy pathway wound
That brought me to a darksome cave:
I heard, undaunted, underground
Wild winds and wilder voices rave,

"And plunged into that stormy world.
Cold hands assailed me impotent
In the gross darkness; serpents curled
About my limbs; but on I went.

"The wild winds buffeted my face;
The wilder voices shrieked despair;
A stealthy step with mine kept pace,
And subtle terror steeped the air.

"But the sweet sound that throbbed on high
Had left the upper world; and still
A cry rang in my heart—a cry!
For lo, far in the hollow hill,

"The dulcet melody withdrawn
Kept welling through the fierce uproar
As I have seen the molten dawn
Across a swarthy tempest pour,

"So suddenly the magic note,
Transformed to light, a glittering brand,
Out of the storm and darkness smote
A peaceful sky, a dewy land.

"I scarce could breathe, I might not stir,
The while there came across the lea,
With singing maidens after her,
A woman wonderful to see.

"Her face—her face was strong and sweet;
Her looks were loving prophecies;
She kissed my brow: I kissed her feet—
A woman wonderful to kiss.

"She took me to a place apart
Where eglantine and roses wove
A bower, and gave me all her heart—
A woman wonderful to love.

"As I lay worshiping my bride,
While rose leaves in her bosom fell,
And dreams came sailing on a tide
Of sleep, I heard a matin bell.

"It beat my soul as with a rod
Tingling with horror of my sin;
I thought of Christ, I thought of God,
And of the fame I meant to win.

"I rose; I ran; nor looked behind;
The doleful voices shrieked despair
In tones that pierced the crashing wind;
And subtle terror warped the air.

"About my limbs the serpents curled;
The stealthy step with mine kept pace;
But soon I reached the upper world:
I sought a priest; I prayed for grace.

"He said, 'Sad sinner, do you know
What fiend this is, the baleful cause
Of your dismay?' I loved her so
I never asked her what she was.

"He said, 'Perhaps not God above
Can pardon such unheard-of ill:
It was the pagan Queen of Love
Who lured you to her haunted hill!

" 'Each hour you spent with her was more
Than a full year! Only the Pope
Can tell what heaven may have in store
For one who seems past help and hope.'

"Forthwith I took the way to Rome:
I scarcely slept; I scarcely ate:
And hither quaking am I come,
But resolute to know my fate.

"Most Holy Father, save my soul! . . .
Ah God! again I hear the chime,
Sweeter than liquid bells that toll
Across a lake at vesper time. . . .

"Her eyelids droop . . . I hear her sigh . . .
The rose-leaves fall . . . She falls asleep . . .
The cry rings in my blood—the cry
That surges from the deepest deep.

"No man was ever tempted so!—
I say not this in my defense . . .
Help, Father, help! or I must go!
The dulcet music draws me hence!"

He knelt—he fell upon his face.
Pope Urban said, "The eternal cost
Of guilt like yours eternal grace
Dare not remit: your soul is lost.

"When this dead staff I carry grows
Again and blossoms, heavenly light
May shine on you." Tannhäuser rose;
And all at once his face grew bright.

He saw the emerald leaves unfold,
The emerald blossoms break and glance;
They watched him, wondering to behold
The rapture of his countenance.

The undivined, eternal God
Looked on him from the highest heaven,
And showed him by the budding rod
There was no need to be forgiven.

He heard melodious voices call
Across the world, an elfin shout;
And when he left the council-hall,
It seemed a great light had gone out.

With anxious heart, with troubled brow,
The Synod turned upon the Pope.
They saw; they cried, "A living bough,
A miracle, a pledge of hope!"

And Urban trembling saw: "God's way
Is not as man's," he said. "Alack!
Forgive me, gracious heaven, this day
My sin of pride. Go, bring him back."

But swift as thought Tannhäuser fled,
And was not found. He scarcely slept;
He scarcely ate; for overhead
The ceaseless, dulcet music kept

Wafting him on. And evermore
The foliate staff he saw at Rome
Pointed the way; and the winds bore
Sweet voices whispering him to come.

The air, a world-enfolding flood
Of liquid music poured along;
And the wild cry within his blood
Became at last a golden song.

"All day," he sang—"I feel all day
The earth dilate beneath my feet;
I hear in fancy far away
The tidal heart of ocean beat.

"My heart amasses as I run
The depth of heaven's sapphire flower;
The resolute, enduring sun
Fulfills my soul with splendid power.

"I quiver with divine desire;
I clasp the stars; my thoughts immerse
Themselves in space; like fire in fire
I melt into the universe.

"For I am running to my love:
The eager roses burn below;
Orion wheels his sword above,
To guard the way God bids me go."

At dusk he reached the mountain chain
Wherein athwart the deepening gloom,
High hung above the wooded plain
The Hörselberg rose like a tomb.

He plunged into the under-world;
Cold hands assailed him impotent
In the gross darkness; serpents curled
About his limbs; but on he went.

The wild winds buffeted his face;
The wilder voices shrieked despair;
A stealthy step with his kept pace;
And subtle terror steeped the air.

But once again the magic note,
Transformed to light, a glittering brand,
Out of the storm and darkness smote
A peaceful sky, a dewy land.

And once again he might not stir,
The while there came across the lea
With singing maidens after her
The Queen of Love so fair to see.

Her happy face was strong and sweet;
Her looks were loving prophecies;
She kissed his brow; he kissed her feet—
He kissed the ground her feet did kiss.

She took him to a place apart
Where eglantine and roses wove
A bower, and gave him all her heart—
The Queen of Love, the Queen of Love.

As he lay worshiping his bride
While rose-leaves in her bosom fell,
And dreams came sailing on a tide
Of sleep, he heard a matin-bell.

"Hark! Let us leave the magic hill,"
He said, "And live on earth with men."
"No; here," she said, "we stay, until
The Golden Age shall come again."

And so they wait, while empires sprung
Of hatred thunder past above,
Deep in the earth for ever young
Tannhäuser and the Queen of Love.

A BALLAD OF A NUN

From Eastertide to Eastertide
For ten long years her patient knees
Engraved the stones—the fittest bride
Of Christ in all the diocese.

She conquered every earthly lust;
The abbess loved her more and more;
And, as a mark of perfect trust,
Made her the keeper of the door.

High on a hill the convent hung,
Across a duchy looking down,
Where everlasting mountains flung
Their shadows over tower and town.

The jewels of their lofty snows
In constellations flashed at night;
Above their crests the moon arose;
The deep earth shuddered with d
light.

Long ere she left her cloudy bed,
Still dreaming in the orient land,
On many a mountain's happy head
Dawn lightly laid her rosy hand.

The adventurous sun took Heaven by storm;
Clouds scattered largesses of rain;
The sounding cities, rich and warm,
Smouldered and glittered in the plain.

Sometimes it was a wandering wind,
Sometimes the fragrance of the pine,
Sometimes the thought how others sinned,
That turned her sweet blood into wine.

Sometimes she heard a serenade
Complaining sweetly far away:
She said, "A young man woos a maid";
And dreamt of love till break of day.

Then would she ply her knotted scourge
Until she swooned; but evermore
She had the same red sin to purge,
Poor, passionate keeper of the door!

For still night's starry scroll unfurled,
And still the day came like a flood:
It was the greatness of the world
That made her long to use her blood.

In winter-time when Lent drew nigh,
And hill and plain were wrapped in snow,
She watched beneath the frosty sky
The nearest city nightly glow.

Like peals of airy bells outworn
Faint laughter died above her head
In gusts of broken music borne:
"They keep the Carnival," she said.

Her hungry heart devoured the town:
"Heaven save me by a miracle!
Unless God sends an angel down,
Thither I go though it were Hell."

She dug her nails deep in her breast,
Sobbed, shrieked, and straight withdrew the bar:
A fledgling flying from the nest,
A pale moth rushing to a star.

Fillet and veil in strips she tore;
Her golden tresses floated wide;
The ring and bracelet that she wore
As Christ's betrothed, she cast aside.

"Life's dearest meaning I shall probe;
Lo! I shall taste of love at last!
Away!" She doffed her outer robe,
And sent it sailing down the blast.

Her body seemed to warm the wind;
With bleeding feet o'er ice she ran:
"I leave the righteous God behind;
I go to worship sinful man."

She reached the sounding city's gate;
No question did the warder ask:
He passed her in: "Welcome, wild mate!"
He thought her some fantastic mask.

Half-naked through the town she went;
Each footstep left a bloody mark;
Crowds followed her with looks intent;
Her bright eyes made the torches dark.

Alone and watching in the street
There stood a grave youth nobly dressed;
To him she knelt and kissed his feet;
Her face her great desire confessed.

Straight to his house the nun he led:
"Strange lady, what would you with me?"
"Your love, your love, sweet lord," she said;
"I bring you my virginity."

He healed her bosom with a kiss;
She gave him all her passion's hoard;
And sobbed and murmured ever, "This
Is life's great meaning, dear, my lord.

"I care not for my broken vow;
Though God should come in thunder soon,
I am sister to the mountains now,
And sister to the sun and moon."

Through all the towns of Belmarie
She made a progress like a queen.
"She is," they said, "whate'er she be,
The strangest woman ever seen.

"From fairyland she must have come,
Or else she is a mermaiden."
Some said she was a ghoul, and some
A heathen goddess born again.

But soon her fire to ashes burned;
Her beauty changed to haggardness;
Her golden hair to silver turned;
The hour came of her last caress.

At midnight from her lonely bed
She rose, and said, "I have had my will."
The old ragged robe she donned, and fled
Back to the convent on the hill.

Half-naked as she went before,
She hurried to the city wall;
Unnoticed in the rush and roar
And splendor of the carnival.

No question did the warder ask:
Her ragged robe, her shrunken limb,
Her dreadful eyes! "It is no mask;
It is a she-wolf, gaunt and grim!"

She ran across the icy plain;
Her worn blood curdled in the blast;
Each footstep left a crimson stain;
The white-faced moon looked on aghast.

She said between her chattering jaws,
"Deep peace is mine, I cease to strive;
Oh, comfortable convent laws,
That bury foolish nuns alive!

"A trowel for my passing-bell,
A little bed within the wall,
A coverlet of stones; how well
I there shall keep the Carnival!"

Like tired bells chiming in their sleep,
The wind faint peals of laughter bore;
She stopped her ears and climbed the steep,
And thundered at the convent door.

It opened straight: she entered in,
And at the wardress' feet fell prone:
"I come to purge away my sin;
Bury me, close me up in stone."

The wardress raised her tenderly;
She touched her wet and fast-shut eyes:
"Look, sister; sister, look at me;
Look; can you see through my disguise?"

She looked and saw her own sad face,
And trembled, wondering, "Who art thou?"
"God sent me down to fill your place:
I am the Virgin Mary now."

And with the word, God's mother shone;
The wanderer whispered, "Mary, hail!"
The vision helped her to put on
Bracelet and fillet, ring and veil.

"You are a sister to the mountains now,
And sister to the day and night;
Sister to God." And on the brow
She kissed her thrice, and left her sight.

While dreaming in her cloudy bed,
Far in the crimson orient land,
On many a mountain's happy head
Dawn lightly laid her rosy hand.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER
(1884–1915)

THE BALLAD OF CAMDEN TOWN

I walked with Maisie long years back
The streets of Camden Town,
I splendid in my suit of black,
And she divine in brown.

Hers was a proud and noble face,
A secret heart, and eyes
Like water in a lonely place
Beneath unclouded skies.

A bed, a chest, a faded mat,
And broken chairs a few,
Were all we had to grace our flat
In Hazel Avenue.

But I could walk to Hampstead Heath,
And crown her head with daisies,
And watch the streaming world beneath,
And men with other Maisies.

When I was ill and she was pale
And empty stood our store,
She left the latchkey on the nail,
And saw me nevermore.

Perhaps she cast herself away
Lest both of us should drown:
Perhaps she feared to die, as they
Who die in Camden Town.

What came of her? The bitter nights
Destroy the rose and lily,
And souls are lost among the lights
Of painted Piccadilly.

What came of her? The river flows
So deep and wide and stilly,
And waits to catch the fallen rose
And clasp the broken lily.

I dream she dwells in London still
And breathes the evening air,
And often walk to Primrose Hill,
And hope to meet her there.

Once more together we will live,
For I will find her yet:
I have so little to forgive;
So much, I can't forget.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON
(1878–)

THE DROVE-ROAD [1]

'Twas going to snow—'twas snowing!
Curse his luck!
And fifteen mile to travel—here was he
With nothing but an empty pipe to suck,
And half a flask of rum—but that would be
More welcome later on. He'd had a drink
Before he left; and that would keep him warm
A tidy while; and 'twould be good to think
He'd something to fall back on, if the storm
Should come to much. You never knew with snow.
A sup of rain he didn't mind at all,
But snow was different with so far to go—
Full fifteen mile, and not a house of call.
Aye, snow was quite another story, quite—
Snow on these fell-tops with a northeast wind
Behind it, blowing steadily with a bite
That made you feel that you were stark and skinned.

And those poor beasts—and they just off the boat
A day or so, and hardly used to land—
Still dizzy with the sea, their wits afloat.

[1] By permission from *Poems 1904-1917* by W. W. Gibson, copyright 1917 by The Macmillan Company.

When they first reached the dock, they scarce could stand,
They'd been so joggled. It's gey bad to cross,
After a long day's jolting in the train,
Thon Irish Channel, always pitch and toss—
And heads or tails, not much for them to gain!
And then the market, and the throng and noise
Of yapping dogs; and they stung mad with fear,
Welted with switches by those senseless boys—
He'd like to dust their jackets! But 'twas queer,
A beast's life, when you came to think of it
From start to finish,—queerer, aye, a lot,
Than any man's, and chancier a good bit.
With his ash-sapling at their heels they'd got
To travel before night those fifteen miles
Of hard fell-road, against the driving snow,
Half blinded, on and on. He thought at whiles
'Twas just as well for them they couldn't know.

Though, as for that, 'twas little that he knew
Himself what was in store for him. He took
Things as they came. 'Twas all a man could do;
And he'd kept going, somehow, by hook or crook.
And here he was, with fifteen mile of fell,
And snow, and—God, but it was blowing stiff!
And no tobacco. Blest if he could tell
Where he had lost it—but, for half a whiff
He'd swap the very jacket off his back.
Not that he'd miss the cobweb of old shreds
That held the holes together. Thon Cheap-Jack
Who'd sold it him had said it was Lord Ted's,
And London cut. But Teddy had grown fat
Since he'd been made an alderman. . . . His bid?
And did the gentleman not want a hat
To go with it, a topper? If he did,
Here was the very . . .
Hell, but it was cold:
And driving dark it was—nigh dark as night.
He'd almost think he must be getting old,
To feel the wind so. And long out of sight
The beasts had trotted. Well, what odds! The way
Ran straight for ten miles on, and they'd go straight.
They'd never heed a byroad. Many a day
He'd had to trudge on, trusting them to fate,
And always found them safe. They scamper fast,
But in the end a man could walk them down.
They're showy trotters, but they cannot last.
He'd race the fastest beast for half a crown
On a day's journey. Beasts were never made
For steady traveling: drive them twenty mile,
And they were done; while he was not afraid
To tackle twice that distance with a smile.

But not a day like this! He'd never felt
A wind with such an edge. 'Twas like the blade
Of the rasper in the pocket of his belt

He kept for easy shaving. In his trade
You'd oft to make your toilet under a dyke—
And he was always one for a clean chin,
And carried soap.—He'd never felt the like—
That wind, it cut clean through him to the skin.
He might be mother-naked, walking bare,
For all the use his clothes were, with the snow
Half blinding him, and clagging to his hair,
And trickling down his spine. He'd like to know
What was the sense of pegging steadily,
Chilled to the marrow, after a daft herd
Of draggled beasts he couldn't even see!

But that was him all over! Just a word,
A nod, a wink, the price of half-and-half—
And he'd be setting out for God-knows-where,
With no more notion than a yearling calf
Where he would find himself when he got there.
And he'd been traveling hard on sixty year
The same old road, the same old giddy gait;
And he'd be walking, for a pint of beer,
Into his coffin, one day, soon or late—
But not with such a tempest in his teeth,
Half blinded and half dothered, that he hoped!
He'd met a sight of weather on the heath,
But this beat all.
'Twas worse than when he'd groped
His way that evening down the Mallerstang—
Thon was a blizzard, thon—and he was done,
And almost dropping when he came a-bang
Against a house—slap-bang, and like to stun!—
Though that just saved his senses—and right there
He saw a lighted window he'd not seen,
Although he'd nearly staggered through its glare
Into a goodwife's kitchen, where she'd been
Baking hot griddlecakes upon the peat.
And he could taste them now, and feel the glow
Of steady, aching, tingly, drowsy heat,
As he sat there and let the caking snow
Melt off his boots, staining the sanded floor.
And that brown jug she took down from the shelf—
And every time he'd finished, fetching more,
And piping, "Now reach up, and help yourself!"
She was a wonder, thon, the gay old wife—
But no such luck this journey. Things like that
Could hardly happen every day of life,
Or no one would be dying, but the fat
And oily undertakers, starved to death
For want of custom. . . . Hell! but he would soon
Be giving them a job. It caught your breath,
That throttling wind. And it was not yet noon;
And he'd be traveling through it until dark.
Dark! 'Twas already dark, and might be night
For all that he could see.
And not a spark
Of comfort for him! Just to strike a light,
And press the kindling shag down in the bowl,
Keeping the flame well shielded by his hand,

And puff, and puff! He'd give his very soul
For half a pipe. He couldn't understand
How he had come to lose it. He'd the rum—
Aye, that was safe enough; but it would keep
Awhile; you never knew what chance might come
In such a storm . . .
If he could only sleep—
If he could only sleep . . . That rustling sound
Of drifting snow, it made him sleepy-like—
Drowsy and dizzy, dithering round and round.
If he could only curl up under a dyke,
And sleep and sleep . . . It dazzled him, that white,
Drifting and drifting, round and round and round . . .
Just half a moment's snooze. He'd be all right.
It made his head quite dizzy, that dry sound
Of rustling snow. It made his head go round—
That rustling in his ears . . . and drifting, drifting . . .
If he could only sleep . . . he would sleep sound . . .
God, he was nearly gone!
The storm was lifting;
And he'd run into something soft and warm—
Slap into his own beasts, and never knew.
Huddled they were, bamboozled by the storm—
And little wonder either, when it blew
A blasted blizzard. Still, they'd got to go.
They couldn't stand there snoozing until night.

But they were sniffing something in the snow.
'Twas that had stopped them, something big and white—
A bundle—nay, a woman. And she slept.
But it was death to sleep.
He'd nearly dropped
Asleep himself. 'Twas well that he had kept
That rum; and lucky that the beasts had stopped.

Aye, it was well that he had kept the rum.
He liked his drink; but he had never cared
For soaking by himself, and sitting mum.
Even the best rum tasted better, shared.

THOMAS HARDY (1840–)

THE PEASANT'S CONFESSION

"Si le maréchal Grouchy avait été rejoint par l'officier que Napoléon lui avait expédié la veille à dix heures du soir, toute question eût disparu. Mais cet officier n'était point parvenu à sa destination, ainsi que le maréchal n'a cessé de l'affirmer toute sa vie, et il faut l'en croire, car autrement il n'aurait en aucune raison pour hésiter. Cet officier avait-il été pris? avait-il passé à l'ennemi? C'est ce qu'on a toujours ignoré."—Thiers, *Histoire de l'Empire*. "Waterloo."

Good Father! . . . It was eve in middle June,
And war was waged anew
By great Napoleon, who for years had strewn
Men's bones all Europe through.

Three nights ere this, with columned corps he'd cross'd
The Sambre at Charleroi,
To move on Brussels, where the English host
Dallied in Parc and Bois.

The yestertide we'd heard the gloomy gun
Growl through the long-sunned day

From Quatre-Bras and Ligny; till the dun
Twilight suppressed the fray;

Albeit therein—as lated tongues bespoke—
Brunswick's high heart was drained,
And Prussia's Line and Landwehr, though unbroke,
Stood cornered and constrained.

And at next noon-time Grouchy slowly passed
With thirty thousand men:
We hoped thenceforth no army, small or vast,
Would trouble us again.

My hut lay deeply in a vale recessed,
And never a soul seemed nigh
When, reassured at length, we went to rest—
My children, wife, and I.

But what was this that broke our humble ease?
What noise, above the rain,
Above the dripping of the poplar trees
That smote along the pane?

—A call of mastery, bidding me arise,
Compelled me to the door,
At which a horseman stood in martial guise—
Splashed—sweating from every pore.

Had I seen Grouchy! Yes? What track took he?
Could I lead thither on?—
Fulfilment would ensure much gold for me,
Perhaps more gifts anon.

"I bear the Emperor's mandate," then he said,
"Charging the Marshal straight
To strike between the double host ahead
Ere they coöperate,

"Engaging Blücher till the Emperor put
Lord Wellington to flight,
And next the Prussians. This to set afoot
Is my emprise to-night."

I joined him in the mist; but, pausing, sought
To estimate his say.
Grouchy had made for Wavre; and yet, on thought,
I did not lead that way.

I mused: "If Grouchy thus and thus be told,
The clash comes sheer hereon;
My farm is stript. While, as for gifts of gold,
Money the French have none.

"Grouchy unwarned, moreo'er, the English win,
And mine is left to me—
They buy, not borrow."—Hence did I begin
To lead him treacherously.

And as we edged Joidoigne with cautious view
Dawn pierced the humid air;
And still I easted with him, though I knew
Never marched Grouchy there.

Near Ottignies we passed, across the Dyle
(Lim'lette left far aside),
And thence direct toward Pervez and Noville
Through green grain, till he cried:

"I doubt thy conduct, man! no track is here—
I doubt thy gagèd word!"
Thereat he scowled on me, and prancing near,
He pricked me with his sword.

"Nay, Captain, hold! We skirt, not trace the course
Of Grouchy," said I then:
"As we go, yonder went he, with his force
Of thirty thousand men."

—At length noon nighed; when west, from Saint-John's-Mound,
A hoarse artillery boomed,
And from Saint-Lambert's upland, chapel-crowned,
The Prussian squadrons loomed.

Then leaping to the wet wild path we had kept,
"My mission fails!" he cried;
"Too late for Grouchy now to intercept,
For, peasant, you have lied!"

He turned to pistol me. I sprang, and drew
The saber from his flank,
And 'twixt his nape and shoulder, ere he knew,
I struck, and dead he sank.

I hid him deep in nodding rye and oat—
His shroud green stalks and loam;
His requiem the corn-blade's husky note—
And then I hastened home . . .

—Two armies writhe in coils of red and blue,
And brass and iron clang
From Goumont, past the front of Waterloo,
To Pap'lotte and Smohain.

The Guard Imperial wavered on the height;
The Emperor's face grew glum;
"I sent," he said, "to Grouchy yesternight,
And yet he does not come!"

'Twas then, Good Father, that the French espied,
Streaking the summer land,
The men of Blücher. But the Emperor cried,
"Grouchy is now at hand!"

And meanwhile Vand'leur, Vivian, Maitland, Kempt,
Met d'Erlon, Friant, Ney;
But Grouchy—mis-sent, blamed, yet blame-exempt—
Grouchy was far away.

By even, slain or struck, Michel the strong,
Bold Travers, Dnop, Delord,
Smart Guyot, Reil-le, l'Heriter, Friant,
Scattered that champaign o'er.

Fallen likewise wronged Duhesme, and skilled Lobau
Did that red sunset see;
Colbert, Legros, Blancard! . . . And of the foe
Picton and Ponsonby;

With Gordon, Canning, Blackman, Ompteda,
L'Estrange, Delancey, Packe,
Grose, D'Oyly, Stables, Morice, Howard, Hay,
Von Schwerin, Watzdorf, Boek,

Smith, Phelips, Fuller, Lind, and Battersby,
And hosts of ranksmen round . . .
Memorials linger yet to speak to thee
Of those that bit the ground!

The Guards' last column yielded; dykes of dead
Lay between vale and ridge,
As, thinned yet closing, faint yet fierce, they sped
In packs to Genappe Bridge.

Safe was my stock; my capple cow unslain;
Intact each cock and hen;
But Grouchy far at Wavre all day had lain,
And thirty thousand men.

O Saints, had I but lost my earing corn
And saved the cause once prized!
O Saints, why such false witness had I borne
When late I'd sympathized! . . .

So now, being old, my children eye askance
My slowly dwindling store,
And crave my mite; till, worn with tarriance,
I care for life no more.

To Almighty God henceforth I stand confessed,
And Virgin-Saint Marie;
O Michael, John, and Holy Ones in rest,
Entreat the Lord for me!

T. STURGE MOORE (1870–)

THE ROUT OF THE AMAZONS

(*At Laomedon's Upper Fold*)

Faun (afar off)
Ahi, ahi, ahi, Laomedon!

Laomedon
It is the faun: he is in sore dismay:
That shrewd "Ah ee" denoteth grief or pain.

Faun (nearing)
Ahi, ahi, ahi!

Laomedon
Ah! there he comes!
What bounds!—O Hermes, how he bounds along!
Like to a frog which boys do pelt with stones,
But straighter, without pause: and every leap
Cleareth a rood or more!—He's o'er the stream,
And takes the hurdles of the fold with ease,
And comes, and comes . . .

Faun
Ahi, ahi, ahi!

Laomedon
Heyday, heyday! what fills thee with alarm?

Faun
Ahi!

Laomedon
Take breath, O ægipan, take breath.

Faun
Ahi! Laomedon, art thou alone?

Laomedon
Yea, yea; see, here's a bowl; I'll pour thee out
A draught of milk.

Faun
Nay, stay; thou art alone?

Laomedon
Alone I am, and shall be yet awhile:
My wife and daughters have gone off to bathe;
The heat had wearied them, and, ere sundown,
They wended slowly by yon zig-zag path,
So through the valley wood, on by the stream,
To gain the shore, where, floored with sand, a trough
Between flat shelves of rock doth form a bath

Convenient for their youth and timid hearts;
Yon sail, that twinkles on the far sea marge,
My boys have hoisted; having rowed out thither,
They now await the freshening breeze of night,—
Behold, its first flaw travels the calm bay.

Faun
You love a sober speech and call it best;
Grave rounded syllables; but oh, give ear!
Ahi, ahi! my tale will not support
A measured speech;
It must come like the wind,
Gust upon gust,
With rapid sweeping,
Curve following curve,
Until the waves are tossing and can roar.

Oh, has the zephyr won thy heart to love,
With beauty daring all the other winds
To give him chase? or has
A child armed with a branch
Of silver-willow catkins,
Who dances round the men at work and laughs
His merry gibes?
Oh! it is worse
Than when it falls and hurts itself and weeps,—
More suddenly ended and more utterly,—
When the fair youthful woman,
Brandishing her spear,
Flaunting her cape of spotted leopard skin,
Prancing a white unsaddled horse
As full of bounding mettle as her glance is,
Gashed shrieks and wounded topples to the ground!
Ah! it is worse than when a lovely day is
In rushing storm englutted,
To see her dragged by one foot from the fight,
Amid the hooves whirled by a frantic steed,
Her head trailed through the dust, her poor bruised face
Like a down-beaten muddied flower, fainted,—
Her white hands trodden upon,
Her white hands trodden upon.
What pain! alas, what pain!

Laomedon
What hast thou seen, ah me! that makes thee weep
That art not wont to weep? Thou cam'st so straight,
That com'st at other times so waywardly;—
Seeking the ferret's hole beneath the hedge,
Chasing the rabbit with a merry whoop,
Mocking the blue-tit swinging upside-down
With his "chin chin," thy fingers in thy teeth,
From lichened bowl picking the mealy moth,
And prying into all creation's hopes.
What ails thee? hast thou seen a goddess fight?
For goddesses do fight among the gods,
Though men with women fight not on the earth.

Faun
Ahi, ahi, ahi! if they did not
I should be as I always am to-day,
But they put on short tunics
Scarce covering half their thighs;
The baldrick o'er their shoulders
And quivers they put on;
To the bow set foot and knee,
String it with twanging cord
And fit the notchèd shaft;
Javelin and spear take up;
And mount the steed and spur him, wearing straps

Wound round the heel and ankle, tightly wound;
They wheel and prance and canter,
And make him arch his neck,
Rear,—and with delicate knees
Cling to his moistening flanks.
A thousand rode together, poising darts,
Behind them those with other arms came on;
All flaunting down a green-sward valley came
Between Arcadia's gentle holted hills.
It was for beauty like a fleet at sea,
Or like an hundred swans
Sailing before the breeze across a lake!
Their vests of daffodil, or pallid pink
Or milky violet! their saffron caps
And hoods like birds for sudden wing-like flaps!
Their white and piebald mounts! the rich green sward,
The morning light, the blossoming hawthorn trees!
The zephyr's music in the holts that crown
With delicate fern-like trees, each soft knoll's top!
I thought the night had borne me heavenward
And in Olympus I had waked from sleep;
And when their war-song rose
Long tears of rapture ran across my face:
Apollo made it, or, if 'twas not he,
Why, Marsyas died for nought.

Then heard I shouts, male voices,
And turning round I saw them come,
The men of Attica;
With archers on the hills
In bands of twenty strong,
And horsemen in the plain,
And infantry drawn up in branching glens
Which sloped from either side down to the meads;
I knew their stations had been ta'en with care;
And soon the women would have turned the range,
And both those armies in each other's view
Must stand opposed.

In the boughs of an oak I have quaked, where four roads met,
To watch upon either hand draw near to the cross
A boy and a girl both lovely and light of foot,
With life escaping out of unhindering eyes;
My heart has ached for fear that they should not laugh,
Not utter the kindly word when they met, but withstand
The power of either's beauty, and shame-fac'd pass,
Fighting desire in their breasts for lack of a heart
Gallant with daring and sense; my pulse has stood still.

But, for fearing the thing that those nearing armies might do,
When they met in the widening meads at the foot of the hills,
My blood it grew cold, so long a time it stood still.
For now a silence settled on both their hosts,
As a witness fell on those children, when they heard,
Each unseen, the other's approaching step on the road;
For scouts had sighted and made to both sides report.
Ah, that hush was like a December night in my soul,
And dull the sound of the hooves as the dismal sound
In the winter forest that wakes one upon a thaw.

Ahi, ahi, ahi, it was shrewd pain!
And not with a radiant welcome and hearty laugh

Each fronted each; but with a shout like a curse,
With a yell that had stricken the lion's heart with fear,
They on to each other rushed.
Ah! the eyes, that saw it, bleed;
And my ear is a wounded sense!
These were men, that their terrible spears
Hurled at the female breast:
These were men, who the well-aimed arrow
Let fly in the eyes of a girl.

Laomedon
Faun, thou hast dreamed, this cannot be, is not;
I think I know enough this to deny.
Some bitter herb hast eaten and slept ill;
This has been born from fumes; some weed's rank sap
Deludes thee, Faun; there's wolf's-bane in thy blood!
Thou hast seen perchance in wild October night,
After the vintage, some the coarser hinds
Fight with their callets, and hast seen may be
Both wounds and blood dealt upon womankind;
Their clothes rent then, they by the hair were dragged:
They shrieked, they yelled, they tore with nails and teeth.
This in the fair spring night returned to thee,—
The drunken riot, the hideous lustful rage
Transformed and tuned by trees above thy sleep.
There, with life-giving scent of May-time turf
And blossoms's bounty floating the air of night,
Thy nostrils dilating, colored thy dream has been
With delicate clarity; while agile forms,
Such as the Spring befit, rehearsed those crimes
With which the Autumn rude thy soul had laden:
For know, the gently reared have gentle hearts.

Faun
Nay, this was no dream; not at all!
Oh, believe me! for I have plucked no berries,
Have eaten no spotted leaf nor any tongue-shaped,—
Like the adder's tongue, so shaped, so venomed,—
Nor none with prickles touched; the wholesome alone
Have made my salads, and I am not deceived;
It was there, I can show thee the place, and lead thee thither:
Nor these were not country wenches,
Nor did them resemble as dreams resemble
The world and men and gods;
These were the make of princesses, as thou hast told me;
And tended flowers that stand thy house before
Over the weed in the ditch bear not the palm
So far as these o'er some rich herdsman's child,
When, beauty ripe, she wears her very best;
For splendid purposes had these been trained,
And had the aspect of untiared queens;
Were like the tears of the morning for freshness;
Like the arms of the evening thrown up for weariness
Such was the radiance of their arms;—but thrown up,
Oh! thrown up in fright, in terror thrown up,
Those lovely and blood-splashed arms!

I was not on fire for them; think it not of me!
I viewed them not as our wild faunesses; no,
Though I have chased a nymph,
It was not so to-day;
I was sadder than a man to-day.

I will pray Pan fervently
That he may inspire me
With a ditty expressive of that mood
Whose sorrow was richer than joy.
He will do it,
For he is a sad god at his hours;
In the evening he is sad:—
Very often.

Laomedon
The men fought them, thou sayest? lanced them with spears?
Had they no pity then, seeing them bleed?
Surely their hearts were touched then, they stayed then?
The dreadful and upraised sword
Was stayed then, was dropped then? and they
Ran to those they had wounded, lifted them, helped them,
And were at once most gentle with their hands?

Faun
No! nothing of that; for these,
Though they were hurt, were terrible;
Though they bled, they hated;
Though they died, they did not shed tears:
Their knees and arms were unstrung,
But their hearts were not.
Overthrown and puddled round with blood,
They struck at those who approached;
It was not safe to be merciful:
Though of those men some felt pity,
None showed it and lived.
It were better to have been a horse in that battle;
The strong steed knew not
Where he planted his hoof;
He ruined bosoms
That should have suckled heroes,
The children of a god;
But he knew it not.
If he broke the thigh of beauty,
Or crushed the loins
That had sate him so firmly,
With such elegance as the moon has—
The moon that rides white clouds—
Or the sea-nymph whom a dolphin
Bears with pride as with pride he bare her.
This the dumb steed knew not;
But they, the men,
Knew what they did.

Look you,
To destroy beauty
Is what the year doth; the flower
Springs up in tenderness,
Is reared in elegance,
Sometimes to majesty,
But withered it giveth no more delight to the eye
Than an old creased ragged dusty kerchief!
Behold,
The storm it ravageth the sweet season;
Is it not then the fairest trees that suffer most?
What is the sea when tempest belloweth?
Not that wooer which erewhile
The youth, nay even
The maiden could not withstand;
But must be naked
And, bathing, intimately know
The caress of living waters?
A horse is very much as a wind—
It raceth, it is spurred, it becometh wild,
And in madness it rageth;
It hath the form of speed as wind hath the sound;
It forgetteth itself in everything it doth.

Needs must be that beauty perish,
A brief thing everywhere beneath the stars;
If it be otherwise among them,
None will wonder when it is known:
But here we see it short-lived;
Yet is Spring as constant as the fall,
The bud as seer'd petal sure
Despite both storm and frost,
And in despite
Of the terrible hooves of the horse,
The female child
Shall be born and reared in beauty,
And ride and curb the steed
With the grace of those;
But the men who saw them
Shall not see these,
Or if they see them
Be old and chill,
Dull, and of no mettle to enjoy:
And this those men,
Destroying that beauty, knew.
Ah, and they know
More clearly yet by now!

Laomedon
Indeed, indeed, O Faun, thy words are wise;
Such truth as ne'er before sits on thy lips:
This is the pain of thought, and our soul's goad,
This is the spur of man, and sad he is;
To the child alone Spring comes with capturing glee;
Only to youth with sweet coördinate soul,
And powers akin to theirs, will like their own;
The man mature is braced to undertake
What, the last Autumn, had been judged too hard;
For him the Spring has come like self restored.
To age but as reprieve from pain it comes:
The laughing face throws on them some faint smile,
As from a shield the pale round lights a wall
Shed by its brilliant blaze; but oftenest, ah!
The envy of sour impotence is theirs,
Or dull regret, for they cannot be cheered,
Nor can they bless the kindness that would cheer;
Then o'er the grave Spring treads unheeded quite.

Faun
Give me the milk, Laomedon; I thirst.
Thanks. Ah! the milk is good,
As sweet it seems to me
As in those lovely bosoms there was stored
For infants that shall never wail for it.
They broke, they broke, and scattered far and wide,
Even so suddenly as I have seen
The cherry tree almost to one sole gust
Give up its bloom.
Like petals in the breeze, like butterflies,
They headed for the hills,
For shelter with loose rein
On all sides fleeing!
As when among the sheep
A young dog wantonly—that has not learned
To gather in the flock on Helicon,
And make a white drift like late-lingering snows
Among the rocks and cactus of a glen—
As when such young cur wantonly will bark
And run and worry; as then fly the sheep
In headlong terror, so those fair queens fled.
But no Apollo from the clear sweet sky
Hastened, as then sore-vexed the shepherd hastes
To stay the cur with swift correcting stone,
And gather-to the sheep with sager dogs,—
Ah no, ah no, Apollo!

Apollo, where wast thou?
Afar on white Olympus' brow?
Or didst thou some fair Daphne follow?
Or wast thou minding sheep
For some boy shepherd's love
Upon Thessalian steep?—
While in thy car above
A Phaëton, a mortal's child,
The reins had from thy hand beguiled,
With silly pride to drive his father's team,
Heedless of evils, flush-faced, in a dream:—
Cheeks flushed, curls streaming,
Rapt standing in thy car,
In daylight dreaming;
Blissful as sleepers are,
Heedless of evils be they near or far,
Of evils heedless be they near or far.
But close, close, close to me
A feminine splendor on a whirlwind steed
Rushed up, flashed forth, passed by,
Plunging through the crashing brakes
Deep between trees, on, on:
And others—I could hear them broach the wood
At diverse distances;
Some with shrewd wails of pain
For jolted wound, or blow from low-hung bough:
So turned and hastened towards the wooded hills,
Leaving the open valley and the meads
And the harsh voices of victorious men;
And, following tracks some hour, came upon
A stream, and, by the stream
One crouched, half stripped, wiping a wounded foot.
Her bare arms, shaped as dreams of courage are
In some young lover's mind,
Glowed bright with strength, efficiency, and grace:
The woundless foot bespoke a power to dance,
To race, to wheel, and leap,
As tunny's tail expresseth subtler force
And water-quelling feats of deftness rare.
Behind, into an oak bush leaned her shield.
And her long spear: her face
Was strange and sweet as when the spell of thought
Lays hold upon a child,
Who feels no captive yet,
And, when he shall, that instant will escape:
Her hair, a nut-red, hung
Unnetted down her back;
Some vests on which she sate dipped in the stream,
And in the water dipped
One of her silvery greaves
Shapely and curved:
Not far away her horse,
Where the bank widened and the sunshine fell,
Lay panting with green branches strewn o'er him,
Green branches she had first drenched in the stream.
Then, as she staunched her wound,
Her shift fell open and I saw her breast
Quick heaving still:
The flowers that grow upon that lush stream-bank,
Fed with green half-veiled light
Or short half-hours of sun,
Deep in the wood,
No wind could reach to stir; but like some belled
Faint-flushed anemone
Wherein a bee is hid
Her bosom shook.—
I shall not speak about her loveliness
Beyond what now is said:
She never saw me and I left her there.
Soon I on traces came of wildest flight:
The white and spunky end of some dead branch
Snapt on the ground—the wounded toadstool clump

Scattered in chips of sulphur or shrewd red—
Rent and dragged tangle, briar, clematis,
Or woodbine—clotted leaves scooped up, turned over;
Black, moist, and glistening on the dusty mats,
They form where'er the gloom forbiddeth weeds;
Last, ploughed up dints in ruddier needles led me
On to a hill-side plateau: mid the pines
Through which a glade was opened o'er the land,
A shred of silk there fluttered 'gainst the sky.

At foot of tall and grandly-towering pines
Was where she fell; for there she dead lay fallen,
Between two groves of grandly-towering pines.
Yea, here she fell; for here she dead lay fallen
With both arms stretched beyond her upturned face,
Pointing the way her steed had madly fled;
Her feet, where their wake ended in dank grass
Through which they had been trailed some thirty yards,
Lying wound in their straps and scored with scratches;
A spotted skin belting the tattered vests
That chilly shook upon her loins, or framing
A globed discovered breast and firm full throat:
Perfectly still: and in her raven hair
Nested her face like snow on cyprus cradled,
While near one hand a yellow daffodil
With unbruised stalk flaunted its winsome head.
There, while I gazed upon her, I could see
The quiet country melt in haze away
Miles beyond miles. There beautiful she lay,
The tall pines barely murmuring far aloft,
Not stooping and not conscious she was there:
Yet once I saw the ripe and rustling corn
Arch down above a baby sleeping naked;
Tender and careful as Demeter was
Of her Persephone at eighteen months,
So fond the wheat bowed o'er that baby lying
Not far from where men reaped between two fields
Upon a patch of close-grown clover leaves.
A pitcher in a wattled jacket cased,
And food tied with a napkin, stood beside
Its curly flaxen poll; the patterned shawl,
Which once had wrapped it, 'neath its legs lay crumpled,—
For great the warmth and sturdy those fine limbs.
There, under curving heavy-fruited stalks,
And nodding ears of dry and rustling corn,
Between those fields outspread like oceans rolling,
The two-years-old slept sound; and I, who heard
The reapers sing the contest and defeat
Of Linus, to give time to their hard toil,
Might watch her grace in slumber half an hour,
And wonder whether she had dreams or no.
It was a child, whose prettiness in play
Might well have charmed the bird down from the tree:
I, gazing on that dead form, thought of her,
And felt as then I felt, and stole away,
As though a-feared lest she might wake, and scream
To see my horns, brown visage, and white teeth.

Laomedon
Meseems that these must have been amazons,
Beyond the isles that live, beyond the isles;
I have heard tell (but ne'er did credit much)
Of their strange way of life and warlike strength:
And yet, since that thy tongue seems new-endowed,
Perchance thou art inspired of a god
And speakest things that are not, to win love—
To win love hinting grandeurs not contained
In what contains us, air and sight and sound;
For that they should invade our Hellas seems
In very sooth a dream.

Faun
No, no! no dream!
Not far from where that lovely warrior lay
I sate me down in deep and solemn mood,
Then came a bird and sang,—
Sang and flew off once more;
A squirrel came and wondered what it meant;
The nimble rogue had hoped I'd give him chase.
He knew not she lay there in middle glade
Dead, yet as beautiful as hope of health
After one has been sick. And it grew cold,
And the damp spring-tide evening settled in;
Between the tall sad trunks the light grew gray,
And green gave place to blackness in the grass:
With strident cries at times, but ne'er a song,
The birds have gone to roost; and silence reigned
Like the great future, absolute control
Exerting without any sensible sign;—
Lord of an hour, as that great realm of hope
Imposeth all life long. Mutely I prayed
That she to joy might even yet return,
Then looked and saw the stars shine through the boughs,
And far away I heard a silver sound.
At first methought it was the rising moon
Did make a music pure and clear as dew;
But lo, 'twas answered from the west, and soon
Out of the south was gently born again.
I did not move, but mine eyes filled with tears;
And now from many quarters all at once,
And then again in silver dialogue,
Across the inlets of the sea,
Across the plains,
Across successive ranges of the hills,
Fainter than music, more magical than harps,
It rose and was approaching from all sides;
I rocked myself for bliss,—a hallali,
A hallali on horns of crystal sounded.
The nymphs of Artemis they blew those horns
On all the hills, in every forest's heart,
And down the valleys, and across the plains,
And near the distant inlets of the sea,
Where'er a woman's body they had found.
Now close behind me, twenty paces back,
It sounded: and I, turning, saw one stand
With all the dignity and charm of night,
In a white tunic with a gray-green cloak,
Beside that prostrate sister of like grace.
Then knelt she and laid both the arms to rest,
Next straightened both the knees, and closed the shift
Above the breast, ordered the dew-damp hair,

And kissed the eyelids, having lowered them;
Went then and gathered young ferns not far off;
With these she covered up that lovely corse,
Then drew a circle round it with an arrow,
Saying some words of heaven,—some rare spell,
Doubtless of might to stay
The onward rushing wolf, and yet so fine
That it could hold the spider and the ant,
Forbid their entrance like a crystal wall,
And owl or chough or vulture on the wing
Suddenly turn to folly, and their instinct,
Never at fault before, lead far astray,
As though their hearts felt love, and they were gone
To vainly haunt round some fair rock-nymph's lodge,
Or to persuade the moon with lover's sighs.
Sounding again that glory on her horn,
She turned and passed away among the trees.
Soon I arose and sought the freer air
And gazed out o'er the night; and here and there,
Lo! a white tunic and a green-gray cloak
Of fainter than a phosphor radiance, gleamed
Upon the plain, or on the sides of hills.
Ere long I knew they gathered toward that place,—
Winding their horns at times, the while they went,—
Where the main battle raged; and I made thither.
But, when I saw
How many queens were busy on that field,
And with what rapid gliding steps they moved,
Fear fell upon me lest I were surprised,
Actæon-like, and changed to more a beast,
Losing both speech and laughter:—so I fled
Just as the morning was about to break.
An hundred miles have I come straight to thee,
Mine only friend, Laomedon; and now
Haste thee, O shepherd, to return with me;
For though they doubtless buried some last night,
And will to-night inter yet more, I deem
It shall be full a week ere that they quit
Their travail o'er Arcadian hills and dales:
So come, for we may see them at their work
And in our hearts put by so pure a vision,
That though old age and blindness fall on us,
We shall know hours of rapture to the end.

Laomedon

O Faun, I do believe thee, and will come;
For what thou tell'st is worthy of the gods,
And holy Artemis would act e'en so.
First let me say farewell unto my wife
And daughters, for I hear them at the house.
They have returned and shall provide a scrip
With cates and meat, figs and good flask of wine;
For thou hast fasted long, and several days
Must pass before I can be here once more.

Faun

Laomedon, I will await thee; haste!—
So good a man both gods and nymphs respect;
I shall be safe with him. The poor wild faun,
With that kind shepherd who once saved his life,
Shall look upon the holy Artemis

And all her stately and white-tunic'd nymphs.
A man walks slow, our journey will take time.
But, see, he doth return; his wife and girls,
Who take their leave, come with him; I will hide.

Daughter
O father, wilt thou go an hundred miles?

Laomedon
Eudora, yea; an hundred miles, my girl.

His Wife
Laomedon, be heedful and not rash;
Anger no nymph, intrude not on their rites.

Laomedon
Dear, fear me not; farewell.

Little Daughter
An hundred miles is further than the caves?

Eldest Daughter
Yes, Doto, for the caves are scarce ten miles.

Laomedon
Farewell, my sweetest little one, farewell;
Oh, I could kiss you all away to-night!

Another Daughter
There is the faun; I saw him; mother, mother!

The Wife
He will not hurt you, dear; 'tis a kind faun.

Eudora
Father, I cannot think an hundred miles:
It is beyond, beyond, too far, and like
The moon and stars; or are they nearer us?

Laomedon
Further, I think, but ask the reremice that;
Farewell, be good.—Dear wife, one last farewell!

All
Farewell, farewell, farewell; good-by, good-by!

Faun
Hist!
I to the hayrick on yon ridge will pass
And there await thee; I cannot walk slow.

Laomedon
Good, good; agreed!—Ha, ha! see, he is off;
My best strides are no match for bounds like that;—
Didst thou see, Doto, how he leaped i' the dark?

Doto
Ha, ha, the funny faun!

Laomedon
Good-by, sweet one.

All
Father, good-by!

Eudora
The darkness down the hill
Hides him so fast, he seems a shadow now
That waves its hand upon a dark gray wall.

The Mother
There, let us all go home and get to bed;
The boys will not be back till near on dawn;
I hope they will bring fish, for all the meat
Did I thrust in his wallet, wrapped in leaves.
If it be wise to try and see the gods

I know not; but your father is a man,
And men will not be cautious in such things;
So let us get to bed and pray for him.

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT (1862–)

A BALLAD OF JOHN NICHOLSON

It fell in the year of Mutiny,
At darkest of the night,
John Nicholson by Jalándhar came,
On his way to Delhi fight.

And as he by Jalándhar came
He thought what he must do,
And he sent to the Rajah fair greeting,
To try if he were true.

"God grant your Highness length of days,
And friends when need shall be;
And I pray you send your Captains hither,
That they may speak with me."

On the morrow through Jalándhar town
The Captains rode in state;
They came to the house of John Nicholson
And stood before the gate.

The chief of them was Mehtab Singh,
He was both proud and sly;
His turban gleamed with rubies red,
He held his chin full high.

He marked his fellows how they put
Their shoes from off their feet;
"Now wherefore make ye such ado
These fallen lords to greet?

"They have ruled us for a hundred years,
In truth I know not how,
But though they be fain of mastery,
They dare not claim it now."

Right haughtily before them all
The durbar hall he trod,
With rubies red his turban gleamed,
His feet with pride were shod.

They had not been an hour together,
A scanty hour or so,
When Mehtab Singh rose in his place
And turned about to go.

Then swiftly came John Nicholson
Between the door and him,
With anger smoldering in his eyes
That made the rubies dim.

"You are overhasty, Mehtab Singh,"—
Oh, but his voice was low!
He held his wrath with a curb of iron,
That furrowed cheek and brow.

"You are overhasty, Mehtab Singh,
When that the rest are gone,
I have a word that may not wait
To speak with you alone."

The Captains passed in silence forth
And stood the door behind;
To go before the game was played
Be sure they had no mind.

But there within John Nicholson
Turned him on Mehtab Singh,
"So long as the soul is in my body
You shall not do this thing.

"Have ye served us for a hundred years
And yet ye know not why?
We brook no doubt of our mastery,
We rule until we die.

"Were I the one last Englishman
Drawing the breath of life,
And you the master-rebel of all
That stirs this land to strife—

"Were I," said he, "but a Corporal,
And you a Rajput King,
So long as the soul was in my body
You should not do this thing.

"Take off, take off those shoes of pride,
Carry them whence they came;
Your Captains saw your insolence
And they shall see your shame."

When Mehtab Singh came to the door
His shoes they burned his hand,
For there in long and silent lines
He saw the Captains stand.

When Mehtab Singh rode from the gate
His chin was on his breast:
The Captains said, "When the strong command,
Obedience is best."

HE FELL AMONG THIEVES

"Ye have robb'd," said he, "ye have slaughtered and made an end,
Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead:
What will ye more of your guest and sometime friend?"
"Blood for our blood," they said.

He laughed: "If one may settle the score for five,
I am ready; but let the reckoning stand till day:
I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive."
"You shall die at dawn," said they.

He flung his empty revolver down the slope,
He climbed alone to the Eastward edge of the trees;
All night long in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, clasping his knees.

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine where the Yassin river sullenly flows;
He did not see the starlight on the Laspur hills,
Or the far Afghan snows.

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,
The wisteria trailing in at the window wide;
He heard his father's voice from the terrace below
Calling him down to ride.

He saw the gray little church across the park,
The mounds that hid the loved and honored dead;
The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,
The brasses black and red.

He saw the School Close, sunny and green,
The runner beside him, the stand by the parapet wall,
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between,
His own name over all.

He saw the dark wainscot and timbered roof,
The long tables, and the faces merry and keen;
The College Eight and their trainer dining aloof,
The Dons on the daïs serene.

He watched the liner's stem ploughing the foam,
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of her screw;
He heard the passengers' voices talking of home,
He saw the flag she flew.

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,
And strode to his ruined camp below the wood;
He drank the breath of the morning cool and sweet;
His murderers round him stood.

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,
The blood-red snow-peaks chilled to a dazzling white;
He turned, and saw the golden circle at last,
Cut by the Eastern height.

"O glorious Life, Who dwellest in earth and sun,
I have lived, I praise and adore thee."
A sword swept.
Over the pass the voices one by one
Faded, and the hill slept.

ALFRED NOYES (1880–)

THE ADMIRAL'S GHOST

I tell you a tale to-night
Which a seaman told to me,
With eyes that gleamed in the lanthorn light
And a voice as low as the sea.

You could almost hear the stars
Twinkling up in the sky,
And the old wind woke and moaned in the spars,
And the same old waves went by,

Singing the same old song
As ages and ages ago,
While he froze my blood in that deep-sea night
With the things that he seemed to know.

A bare foot pattered on deck;
Ropes creaked; then—all grew still,
And he pointed his finger straight in my face
And growled, as a sea-dog will.

"Do'ee know who Nelson was?
That pore little shriveled form
With the patch on his eye and the pinned-up sleeve
And a soul like a North Sea storm?

"Ask of the Devonshire men!
They know, and they'll tell you true;
He wasn't the pore little chawed-up chap
That Hardy thought he knew.

"He wasn't the man you think!
His patch was a dern disguise!
For he knew that they'd find him out, d'you see,
If they looked him in both his eyes.

"He was twice as big as he seemed;
But his clothes were cunningly made.
He'd both of his hairy arms all right!
The sleeve was a trick of the trade.

"You've heard of sperrits, no doubt;
Well, there's more in the matter than that!
But he wasn't the patch and he wasn't the sleeve,
And he wasn't the laced cocked-hat.

"*Nelson was just—a Ghost!*
You may laugh! But the Devonshire men
They knew that he'd come when England called,
And they know that he'll come again.

"I'll tell you the way it was
(For none of the landsmen know),
And to tell it you right, you must go a-starn
Two hundred years or so.

. . . . . .

"The waves were lapping and slapping
The same as they are to-day;
And Drake lay dying aboard his ship
In Nombre Dios Bay.

"The scent of the foreign flowers
Came floating all around;
'But I'd give my soul for the smell o' the pitch,'
Says he, 'in Plymouth Sound.

" 'What shall I do,' he says,
'When the guns begin to roar,
An' England wants me, and me not there
To shatter 'er foes once more?'

"(You've heard what he said, maybe,
But I'll mark you the p'ints again;
For I want you to box your compass right
And get my story plain.)

" 'You must take my drum,' he says,
'To the old sea-wall at home;
And if ever you strike that drum,' he says,
'Why, strike me blind, I'll come!

" 'If England needs me, dead
Or living, I'll rise that day!
I'll rise from the darkness under the sea
Ten thousand miles away.'

"That's what he said; and he died;
An' his pirates, listenin' roun',
With their crimson doublets and jeweled swords
That flashed as the sun went down.

"They sewed him up in his shroud
With a round-shot top and toe,
To sink him under the salt sharp sea
Where all good seamen go.

"They lowered him down in the deep,
And there in the sunset light
They boomed a broadside over his grave,
As meanin' to say 'Good-night.'

"They sailed away in the dark
To the dear little isle they knew;
And they hung his drum by the old sea-wall
The same as he told them to.

. . . . . .

"Two hundred years went by,
And the guns began to roar,
And England was fighting hard for her life,
As ever she fought of yore.

" 'It's only my dead that count,'
She said, as she says to-day;
'It isn't the ships and it isn't the guns
'Ull sweep Trafalgar's Bay.'

"D'you guess who Nelson was?
You may laugh, but it's true as true!
There was more in that pore little chawed-up chap
Than ever his best friend knew.

"The foe was creepin' close,
In the dark, to our white-cliffed isle;
They were ready to leap at England's throat,
When—O, you may smile, you may smile;

"But—ask of the Devonshire men;
For they heard in the dead of night
The roll of a drum, and they saw *him* pass
On a ship all shining white.

"He stretched out his dead cold face
And he sailed in the grand old way!
The fishes had taken an eye and an arm,
But he swept Trafalgar's Bay.

"Nelson—was Francis Drake!
O, what matters the uniform,
Or the patch on your eye or your pinned-up sleeve,
If your soul's like a North Sea storm."

KILMENY [1]

Dark, dark lay the drifters against the red West,
As they shot their long meshes of steel overside;
And the oily green waters were rocking to rest
When Kilmeny went out, at the turn of the tide;
And nobody knew where that lassie would roam,
For the magic that called her was tapping unseen.
It was well-nigh a week ere Kilmeny came home,
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

She'd a gun at her bow that was Newcastle's best,
And a gun at her stern that was fresh from the Clyde,
And a secret her skipper had never confessed,
Not even at dawn, to his newly-wed bride;
And a wireless that whispered above, like a gnome,
The laughter of London, the boasts of Berlin. . . .
O, it may have been mermaids that lured her from home;
But nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

It was dark when Kilmeny came home from her quest
With her bridge dabbled red where her skipper had died;
But she moved like a bride with a rose at her breast,
And *Well done Kilmeny!* the Admiral cried.

Now, at sixty-four fathom a conger may come
And nose at the bones of a drowned submarine;
But—late in the evening Kilmeny came home,
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

There's a wandering shadow that stares at the foam,
Though they sing all the night to old England, their queen.
Late, late in the evening, Kilmeny came home;
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

[1] The theme is suggested by a well-known poem of the same name, by James Hogg (1772-1835).

THE HIGHWAYMAN

PART ONE

I

The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,
The moon was a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
The road was a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
And the highwayman came riding—
Riding—riding—
The highwayman came riding, up to the old inn-door.

II

He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,
A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;
They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!
And he rode with a jeweled twinkle,
His pistol butts a-twinkle,
His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jeweled sky.

III

Over the cobbles he clattered and clashed
in the dark inn-yard,
And he tapped with his whip on the shutters, but all was locked and barred;
He whistled a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

IV

And dark in the dark old inn-yard a stable-wicket creaked
Where Tim the ostler listened; his face was white and peaked;
His eyes were hollows of madness, his hair like moldy hay,
But he loved the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's red-lipped daughter,
Dumb as a dog he listened, and he heard the robber say—

V

"One kiss, my bonny sweetheart, I'm after a prize to-night,
But I shall be back with the yellow gold before the morning light;
Yet, if they press me sharply, and harry me through the day,
Then look for me by moonlight,
Watch for me by moonlight,
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way."

VI

He rose upright in the stirrups; he scarce could reach her hand,
But she loosened her hair i' the casement; His face burnt like a brand
As the black cascade of perfume came tumbling over his breast;
And he kissed its waves in the moonlight,
(Oh, sweet black waves in the moonlight!)
Then he tugged at his rein in the moonlight, and galloped away to the West.

PART TWO

I

He did not come in the dawning; he did not come at noon;
And out o' the tawny sunset, before the rise o' the moon,
When the road was a gipsy's ribbon, looping the purple moor,
A red-coat troop came marching—
Marching—marching—
King George's men came marching, up to the old inn-door.

II

They said no word to the landlord, they drank his ale instead,
But they gagged his daughter and bound her to the foot of her narrow bed;
Two of them knelt at her casement, with muskets at their side!
There was death at every window;
And hell at one dark window;
For Bess could see, through her casement, the road that *he* would ride

III

They had tied her up to attention, with many a sniggering jest;
They had bound a musket beside her, with the barrel beneath her breast!
"Now keep good watch!" and they kissed her.
She heard the dead man say—

Look for me by moonlight;
Watch for me by moonlight;
I'll come to thee by moonlight, though hell should bar the way!

IV

She twisted her hands behind her; but all the knots held good!
She writhed her hands till her fingers were wet with sweat or blood!
They stretched and strained in the darkness, and the hours crawled by like years,
Till, now, on the stroke of midnight,
Cold, on the stroke of midnight,
The tip of one finger touched it! The trigger at least was hers!

V

The tip of one finger touched it; she strove no more for the rest!
Up, she stood up to attention, with the barrel beneath her breast,
She would not risk their hearing; she would not strive again;
For the road lay bare in the moonlight;
Blank and bare in the moonlight;
And the blood of her veins in the moonlight throbbed to her love's refrain.

VI

Tlot-tlot; tlot-tlot! Had they heard it? The horse-hoofs ringing clear;
Tlot-tlot, tlot-tlot, in the distance? Were they deaf that they did not hear?
Down the ribbon of moonlight, over the brow of the hill,
The highwayman came riding,
Riding, riding!
The red-coats looked to their priming! She stood up, straight and still!

VII

Tlot-tlot, in the frosty silence! *Tlot-tlot,* in the echoing night!
Nearer he came and nearer! Her face was like a light!
Her eyes grew wide for a moment; she drew one last deep breath,
Then her finger moved in the moonlight,
Her musket shattered the moonlight,
Shattered her breast in the moonlight and warned him—with her death.

VIII

He turned; he spurred to the West; he did not know who stood
Bowed, with her head o'er the musket, drenched with her own red blood!
Not till the dawn he heard it, his face grew gray to hear
How Bess, the landlord's daughter,
The landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Had watched for her love in the moonlight, and died in the darkness there.

IX

Back, he spurred like a madman, shrieking a curse to the sky,
With the white road smoking behind him and his rapier brandished high!
Blood-red were his spurs i' the golden noon; wine-red was his velvet-coat,
When they shot him down on the highway,
Down like a dog on the highway,
And he lay in his blood on the highway, with the bunch of lace at his throat.

X

And still of a winter's night, they say, when the wind is in the trees,

When the moon is a ghostly galleon tossed upon cloudy seas,
When the road is a ribbon of moonlight over the purple moor,
A highwayman comes riding—
Riding—riding—
A highwayman comes riding, up to the old inn-door.

XI

Over the cobbles he clatters and clangs in the dark inn-yard;
He taps with his whip on the shutters, but all is locked and barred;
He whistles a tune to the window, and who should be waiting there
But the landlord's black-eyed daughter,
Bess, the landlord's daughter,
Plaiting a dark red love-knot into her long black hair.

SIR OWEN SEAMAN (1861–)

THE RHYME OF THE KIPPERLING
(After R. K.)

[N.B.—No nautical terms or statements guaranteed.]

Away by the haunts of the Yang-tse-boo,
Where the Yuletide runs cold gin,
And the rollicking sign of the *Lord knows Who*
Sees mariners drink like sin;
Where the *Jolly Roger* tips his quart
To the luck of the *Union Jack;*
And some are screwed on the foreign port,
And some on the starboard tack;—
Ever they tell the tale anew
Of the chase for the kipperling swag;
How the smack *Tommy This* and the smack *Tommy That*
They broached each other like a whiskey-vat,
And the *Fuzzy-Wuz* took the bag.

Now this is the law of the herring fleet that harries the northern main,
Tattooed in scars on the chests of the tars with a brand like the brand of Cain:
That none may woo the sea-born shrew save such as pay their way
With a kipperling netted at noon of night and cured ere the crack of day.

It was the woman Sal o' the Dune, and the men were three to one,
Bill the Skipper and Ned the Nipper and Sam that was Son of a Gun;
Bill was a Skipper and Ned was a Nipper and Sam was the Son of a Gun,
And the woman was Sal o' the Dune, as I said, and the men were three to one.

There was never a light in the sky that night of the soft midsummer gales,
But the great man-bloaters snorted low, and the young 'uns sang like whales;
And out laughed Sal (like a dog-toothed wheel was the laugh that Sal laughed she):
"Now who's for a bride on the shady side of up'ards of forty-three?"

And Neddy he swore by butt and bend, and Billy by bend and bitt,
And nautical names that no man frames but your amateur nautical wit;
And Sam said, "Shiver my topping-lifts and scuttle my foc's'le yarn,
And may I be curst, if I'm not in the first with a kipperling slued astarn!"

Now the smack *Tommy This* and the smack *Tommy That* and the *Fuzzy-Wuz* smack, all three,
Their captains bold, they were Bill and Ned and Sam respectivelee.

And it's writ in the rules that the primary schools of kippers should get off cheap
For a two mile reach off Foulness beach when the July tide's at neap;

And the lawless lubbers that lust for loot and filch the yearling stock
They get smart raps from the coast-guard chaps with their blunderbuss fixed half-cock.

Now Bill the Skipper and Ned the Nipper could tell green cheese from blue,
And Bill knew a trick and Ned knew a trick, but Sam knew a trick worth two.

So Bill he sneaks a corporal's breeks and a belt of pipeclayed hide,
And splices them on to the jibsail-boom like a troopship on the tide.

And likewise Ned to his masthead he runs a rag of the Queen's,
With a rusty sword and a moke on board to bray like the Horse Marines.

But Sam sniffs gore and he keeps off-shore and he waits for things to stir,
Then he tracks for the deep with a long fog-horn rigged up like a bow-chasér.

Now scarce had Ned dropped line and lead when he spots the pipeclayed hide,
And the corporal's breeks on the jibsail-boom like a troopship on the tide;
And Bill likewise, when he ups and spies the slip of a rag of the Queen's,
And the rusty sword, and he sniffs aboard the moke of the Horse Marines.

So they each luffed sail, and they each turned tail, and they whipped their wheels like mad,
When the one he said "By the Lord, it's Ned!" and the other, "It's Bill, by Gad!"

Then about and about, and nozzle to snout, they rammed through breach and brace,
And the splinters flew as they mostly do when a Government test takes place.

Then up stole Sam with his little ram and the nautical talk flowed free,
And in good bold type might have covered the two front sheets of the *P.M.G.*[1]

But the fog-horn bluff was safe enough, where all was weed and weft,
And the conger-eels were a-making meals, and the pick of the tackle left
Was a binnacle-lid and a leak in the bilge and the chip of a cracked sheer-strake
And the corporal's belt and the moke's cool pelt and a portrait of Francis Drake.

So Sam he hauls the dead men's trawls and he booms for the harbor-bar,
And the splitten fry are salted dry by the blink of the morning star.

And Sal o' the Dune was wed next moon by the man that paid his way
With a kipperling netted at noon of night and cured ere the crack of day;
For such is the law of the herring fleet that bloats on the northern main,
Tattooed in scars on the chests of the tars with a brand like the brand of Cain.

And still in the haunts of the Yang-tse-boo
Ever they tell the tale anew
Of the chase for the kipperling swag;

[1] *Pall Mall Gazette*

How the smack *Tommy This* and the smack *Tommy That*
They broached each other like a whiskey-vat,
And the *Fuzzy-Wuz* took the bag.

OSCAR WILDE (1856–1900)

THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL

I

He did not wear his scarlet coat,
For blood and wine are red,
And blood and wine were on his hands
When they found him with the dead,
The poor dead woman whom he loved,
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men
In a suit of shabby gray;
A cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay;
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.

I walked with other souls in pain,
Within another ring,
And was wondering if the man had done
A great or little thing,
When a voice behind me whispered low,
"That fellow's got to swing."

Dear Christ! the very prison walls
Suddenly seemed to reel,
And the sky above my head became
Like a casque of scorching steel;
And, though I was a soul in pain,
My pain I could not feel.

I only knew what hunted thought
Quickened his step, and why
He looked upon the garish day
With such a wistful eye;
The man had killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

Some kill their love when they are young,
And some when they are old;
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,
Some with the hands of Gold:
The kindest use a knife, because
The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,
Some sell, and others buy;
Some do the deed with many tears,
And some without a sigh:
For each man kills the thing he loves,
Yet each man does not die.

He does not die a death of shame
On a day of dark disgrace,
Nor have a noose about his neck,
Nor a cloth upon his face,
Nor drop feet foremost through the floor
Into an empty space.

He does not sit with silent men
Who watch him night and day;
Who watch him when he tries to weep,
And when he tries to pray;
Who watch him lest himself should rob
The prison of its prey.

He does not wake at dawn to see
Dread figures throng his room,
The shivering Chaplain robed in white,
The sheriff stern with gloom,

And the Governor all in shiny black,
With the yellow face of Doom.

He does not rise in piteous haste
To put on convict-clothes,
While some coarse-mouthed Doctor gloats, and notes
Each new and nerve-twitched pose,
Fingering a watch whose little ticks
Are like horrible hammer-blows.

He does not know that sickening thirst
That sands one's throat, before
The hangman with his gardener's gloves
Slips through the padded door,
And binds one with three leathern thongs,
That the throat may thirst no more.

He does not bend his head to hear
The Burial Office read,
Nor, while the terror of his soul
Tells him he is not dead,
Cross his own coffin as he moves
Into the hideous shed.

He does not stare upon the air
Through a little roof of glass:
He does not pray with lips of clay
For his agony to pass;
Nor feel upon his shuddering cheek
The kiss of Caiaphas.

II

Six weeks our guardsman walked the yard
In the suit of shabby gray:
His cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay,
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every wandering cloud that trailed
Its raveled fleeces by.

He did not wring his hands, as do
Those witless men who dare
To try to rear the changeling Hope
In the cave of black Despair:
He only looked upon the sun,
And drank the morning air.

He did not wring his hands nor weep,
Nor did he peek or pine,
But he drank the air as though it held
Some healthful anodyne;
With open mouth he drank the sun
As though it had been wine!

And I and all the souls in pain,
Who tramped the other ring,
Forgot if we ourselves had done
A great or little thing,
And watched with gaze of dull amaze
The man who had to swing.

And strange it was to see him pass
With a step so light and gay,
And strange it was to see him look
So wistfully at the day,
And strange it was to think that he
Had such a debt to pay.

For oak and elm have pleasant leaves
That in the spring-time shoot:
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,
With its adder-bitten root,
And, green or dry, a man must die
Before it bears its fruit!

The loftiest place is that seat of grace
For which all worldlings try:
But who would stand in hempen band
Upon a scaffold high,
And through a murderer's collar take
His last look at the sky?

It is sweet to dance to violins
When Love and Life are fair:
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes
Is delicate and rare:
But it is not sweet with nimble feet
To dance upon the air!

So with curious eyes and sick surmise
We watched him day by day,
And wondered if each one of us
Would end the self-same way,
For none can tell to what red Hell
His sightless soul may stray.

At last the dead man walked no more
Amongst the Trial Men,
And I knew that he was standing up
In the black dock's dreadful pen,
And that never would I see his face
In God's sweet world again.

Like two doomed ships that pass in storm
We had crossed each other's way:
But we made no sign, we said no word,
We had no word to say;
For we did not meet in the holy night,
But in the shameful day.

A prison wall was round us both,
Two outcast men we were:
The world had thrust us from its heart,
And God from out His care:
And the iron gin that waits for Sin
Had caught us in its snare.

III

In Debtors' Yard the stones are hard,
And the dripping wall is high,
So it was there he took the air
Beneath the leaden sky.
And by each side a Warder walked,
For fear the man might die.

Or else he sat with those who watched
His anguish night and day;
Who watched him when he rose to weep,
And when he crouched to pray;
Who watched him lest himself should rob
Their scaffold of its prey.

The Governor was strong upon
The Regulations Act:
The Doctor said that Death was but
A scientific fact:
And twice a day the Chaplain called,
And left a little tract.

And twice a day he smoked his pipe,
And drank his quart of beer:
His soul was resolute, and held
No hiding-place for fear;
He often said that he was glad
The hangman's hands were near.

But why he said so strange a thing
No Warder dared to ask:
For he to whom a watcher's doom
Is given as his task,
Must set a lock upon his lips,
And make his face a mask.

Or else he might be moved, and try
To comfort or console:
And what should Human Pity do
Pent up in Murderers' Hole?
What word of grace in such a place
Could help a brother's soul?

With slouch and swing around the ring
We trod the Fools' Parade!
We did not care: we knew we were
The Devil's Own Brigade:
And shaven head and feet of lead
Make a merry masquerade.

We tore the tarry rope to shreds
With blunt and bleeding nails;
We rubbed the doors, and scrubbed the floors,
And cleaned the shining rails:
And, rank by rank, we soaped the plank,
And clattered with the pails.

We sewed the sacks, we broke the stones,
We turned the dusty drill:
We banged the tins, and bawled the hymns,
And sweated on the mill:
But in the heart of every man
Terror was lying still.

So still it lay that every day
  Crawled like a weed-clogged wave:
And we forgot the bitter lot
  That waits for fool and knave,
Till once, as we tramped in from work,
  We passed an open grave.

With yawning mouth the yellow hole
  Gaped for a living thing;
The very mud cried out for blood
  To the thirsty asphalte ring:
And we knew that ere one dawn grew fair
  Some prisoner had to swing.

Right in we went, with soul intent
  On Death and Dread and Doom:
The hangman, with his little bag,
  Went shuffling through the gloom:
And each man trembled as he crept
  Into his numbered tomb.

That night the empty corridors
  Were full of forms of Fear,
And up and down the iron town
  Stole feet we could not hear,
And through the bars that hide the stars
  White faces seemed to peer.

He lay as one who lies and dreams
  In a pleasant meadow-land,
The watchers watched him as he slept,
  And could not understand
How one could sleep so sweet a sleep
  With a hangman close at hand.

But there is no sleep when men must weep
  Who never yet have wept:
So we—the fool, the fraud, the knave—
  That endless vigil kept,
And through each brain on hands of pain
  Another's terror crept.

Alas! it is a fearful thing
  To feel another's guilt!
For, right within, the sword of Sin
  Pierced to its poisoned hilt,
And as molten lead were the tears we shed
  For the blood we had not spilt.

The Warders with their shoes of felt
  Crept by each padlocked door,
And peeped and saw, with eyes of awe,
  Gray figures on the floor,
And wondered why men knelt to pray
  Who never prayed before.

All through the night we knelt and prayed,
  Mad mourners of a corse!
The troubled plumes of midnight were
  The plumes upon a hearse:
And bitter wine upon a sponge
  Was the savor of Remorse.

The gray cock crew, the red cock crew,
  But never came the day:
And crooked shapes of Terror crouched,
  In the corners where we lay:
And each evil sprite that walks by night
  Before us seemed to play.

They glided past, they glided fast,
  Like travelers through a mist:
They mocked the moon in a rigadoon
  Of delicate turn and twist,
And with formal pace and loathsome grace
  The phantoms kept their tryst.

With mop and mow, we saw them go,
  Slim shadows hand in hand:
About, about, in ghostly rout
  They trod a saraband:
And the damned grotesques made arabesques,
  Like the wind upon the sand!

With the pirouettes of marionettes,
  They tripped on pointed tread:
But with flutes of Fear they filled the ear,
  As their grisly masque they led,
And loud they sang, and long they sang,
  For they sang to wake the dead.

"*Oho!*" they cried, "*The world is wide,*
  But fettered limbs go lame!

And once, or twice, to throw the dice
Is a gentlemanly game;
But he does not win who plays with Sin
In the secret House of Shame."

No things of air these antics were,
That frolicked with such glee:
To men whose lives were held in gyves,
And whose feet might not go free.
Ah! wounds of Christ! they were living things,
Most terrible to see.

Around, around, they waltzed and wound;
Some wheeled in smirking pairs;
With the mincing step of a demirep
Some sidled up the stairs:
And with subtle sneer, and fawning leer,
Each helped us at our prayers.

The morning wind began to moan,
But still the night went on:
Through its giant loom the web of gloom
Crept till each thread was spun:
And, as we prayed, we grew afraid
Of the Justice of the Sun.

The moaning wind went wandering round
The weeping prison-wall:
Till like a wheel of turning steel
We felt the minutes crawl:
O moaning wind! what had we done
To have such a seneschal?

At last I saw the shadowed bars,
Like a lattice wrought in lead,
Move right across the whitewashed wall
That faced my three-plank bed,
And I knew that somewhere in the world
God's dreadful dawn was red.

At six o'clock we cleaned our cells,
At seven all was still,
But the sough and swing of a mighty wing
The prison seemed to fill,
For the Lord of Death with icy breath
Had entered in to kill.

He did not pass in purple pomp,
Nor ride a moon-white steed.
Three yards of cord and a sliding board
Are all the gallows' need:
So with rope of shame the Herald came
To do the secret deed.

We were as men who through a fen
Of filthy darkness grope:
We did not dare to breathe a prayer,
Or to give our anguish scope:
Something was dead in each of us,
And what was dead was Hope.

For Man's grim Justice goes its way,
And will not swerve aside:
It slays the weak, it slays the strong,
It has a deadly stride:
With iron heel it slays the strong,
The monstrous parricide!

We waited for the stroke of eight:
Each tongue was thick with thirst:
For the stroke of eight is the stroke of Fate
That makes a man accursed,
And Fate will use a running noose
For the best man and the worst.

We had no other thing to do,
Save to wait for the sign to come:
So, like things of stone in a valley lone,
Quiet we sat and dumb:
But each man's heart beat thick and quick,
Like a madman on a drum!

With sudden shock the prison clock
Smote on the shivering air,
And from all the gaol rose up a wail
Of impotent despair,
Like the sound that frightened marshes hear
From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things
In the crystal of a dream,

We saw the greasy hempen rope
Hooked to the blackened beam,
And heard the prayer the hangman's snare
Strangled into a scream.

And all the woe that moved him so
That he gave that bitter cry,
And the wild regrets, and the bloody sweats,
None knew so well as I:
For he who lives more lives than one
More deaths than one must die.

IV

There is no chapel on the day
On which they hang a man:
The Chaplain's heart is far too sick,
Or his face is far too wan,
Or there is that written in his eyes
Which none should look upon.

So they kept us close till nigh on noon,
And then they rang the bell,
And the Warders with their jingling keys
Opened each listening cell,
And down the iron stair we tramped,
Each from his separate Hell.

Out into God's sweet air we went,
But not in wonted way,
For this man's face was white with fear,
And that man's face was gray,
And I never saw sad men who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw sad men who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
We prisoners called the sky,
And at every careless cloud that passed
In happy freedom by.

But there were those amongst us all
Who walked with downcast head,
And knew that, had each got his due,
They should have died instead:
He had but killed a thing that lived,
Whilst they had killed the dead.

For he who sins a second time
Wakes a dead soul to pain,
And draws it from its spotted shroud.
And makes it bleed again,
And makes it bleed great gouts of blood,
And makes it bleed in vain!

Like ape or clown, in monstrous garb
With crooked arrows starred,
Silently we went round and round
The slippery asphalte yard;
Silently we went round and round,
And no man spoke a word.

Silently we went round and round,
And through each hollow mind
The Memory of dreadful things
Rushed like a dreadful wind,
And Horror stalked before each man,
And Terror crept behind.

The Warders strutted up and down,
And kept their herd of brutes,
Their uniforms were spick and span,
And they wore their Sunday suits,
But we knew the work they had been at,
By the quicklime on their boots.

For where a grave had opened wide,
There was no grave at all:
Only a stretch of mud and sand
By the hideous prison-wall,
And a little heap of burning lime,
That the man should have his pall.

For he has a pall, this wretched man,
Such as few men can claim:
Deep down below a prison-yard,
Naked for greater shame,
He lies, with fetters on each foot,
Wrapt in a sheet of flame!

And all the while the burning lime
  Eats flesh and bone away;
It eats the brittle bone by night,
  And the soft flesh by day;
It eats the flesh and bone by turns,
  But it eats the heart alway.

For three long years they will not sow
  Or root or seeding there:
For three long years the unblessed spot
  Will sterile be and bare,
And look upon the wondering sky
  With unreproachful stare.

They think the murderer's heart would taint
  Each simple seed they sow.
It is not true! God's kindly earth
  Is kindlier than men know,
And the red rose would but blow more red,
  The white rose whiter blow.

Out of his mouth a red, red rose!
  Out of his heart a white!
For who can say by what strange way,
  Christ brings His will to light,
Since the barren staff the pilgrim bore
  Bloomed in the great Pope's sight?

But neither milk-white rose nor red
  May bloom in prison air;
The shard, the pebble, and the flint,
  Are what they give us there:
For flowers have been known to heal
  A common man's despair.

So never will wine-red rose or white,
  Petal by petal, fall
On that stretch of mud and sand that lies
  By the hideous prison-wall,
To tell the men who tramp the yard
  That God's Son died for all.

Yet though the hideous prison-wall
  Still hems him round and round,
And a spirit may not walk by night
  That is with fetters bound,
And a spirit may but weep that lies
  In such unholy ground.

He is at peace—this wretched man—
  At peace, or will be soon:
There is no thing to make him mad,
  Nor does Terror walk at noon,
For the lampless Earth in which he lies
  Has neither Sun nor Moon.

They hanged him as a beast is hanged:
  They did not even toll
A requiem that might have brought
  Rest to his startled soul,
But hurriedly they took him out,
  And hid him in a hole.

They stripped him of his canvas clothes,
  And gave him to the flies;
They mocked the swollen purple throat,
  And the stark and staring eyes:
And with laughter loud they heaped the shroud
  In which their convict lies.

The Chaplain would not kneel to pray
  By his dishonored grave:
Nor mark it with that blessed Cross
  That Christ for sinners gave,
Because the man was one of those
  Whom Christ came down to save.

Yet all is well; he has but passed
  To Life's appointed bourne:
And alien tears will fill for him
  Pity's long-broken urn,
For his mourners will be outcast men,
  And outcasts always mourn.

V

I know not whether Laws be right,
  Or whether Laws be wrong;
All that we know who lie in gaol
  Is that the wall is strong;

And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

But this I know, that every Law
That men have made for Man,
Since first Man took his brother's life,
And the sad world began,
But straws the wheat and saves the chaff
With a most evil fan.

This too I know—and wise it were
If each could know the same—
That every prison that men build
Is built with bricks of shame,
And bound with bars lest Christ should see
How men their brothers maim.

With bars they blur the gracious moon,
And blind the goodly sun:
And they do well to hide their Hell,
For in it things are done
That Son of God nor Son of Man
Ever should look upon!

The vilest deeds like poison weeds
Bloom well in prison-air:
It is only what is good in Man
That wastes and withers there:
Pale Anguish keeps the heavy gate,
And the Warder is Despair.

For they starve the little frightened child
Till it weeps both night and day:
And they scourge the weak, and flog the fool,
And gibe the old and gray,
And some grow mad, and all grow bad,
And none a word may say.

Each narrow cell in which we dwell
Is a foul and dark latrine.
And the fetid breath of living Death
Chokes up each grated screen,
And all, but Lust, is turned to dust
In Humanity's machine.

The brackish water that we drink
Creeps with a loathsome slime,
And the bitter bread they weigh in scales
Is full of chalk and lime,
And Sleep will not lie down, but walks
Wild-eyed, and cries to Time.

But though lean Hunger and green Thirst
Like asp with adder fight,
We have little care of prison fare,
For what chills and kills outright
Is that every stone one lifts by day
Becomes one's heart by night.

With midnight always in one's heart,
And twilight in one's cell,
We turn the crank, or tear the rope,
Each in his separate Hell,
And the silence is more awful far
Than the sound of a brazen bell.

And never a human voice comes near
To speak a gentle word:
And the eye that watches through the door
Is pitiless and hard:
And by all forgot, we rot and rot,
With soul and body marred.

And thus we rust Life's iron chain
Degraded and alone:
And some men curse, and some men weep,
And some men make no moan:
But God's eternal Laws are kind
And break the heart of stone.

And every human heart that breaks,
In prison-cell or yard,
Is as that broken box that gave
Its treasure to the Lord,
And filled the unclean leper's house
With the scent of costliest nard.

Ah! happy they whose hearts can break
And peace and pardon win!
How else may man make straight his plan
And cleanse his soul from Sin?

How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in?

And he of the swollen purple throat,
And the stark and staring eyes
Waits for the holy hands that took
The Thief to Paradise;
And a broken and a contrite heart
The Lord will not despise.

The man in red who reads the Law
Gave him three weeks of life,
Three little weeks in which to heal
His soul of his soul's strife,
And cleanse from every blot of blood
The hand that held the knife.

And with tears of blood he cleansed the hand,
The hand that held the steel:
For only blood can wipe out blood,
And only tears can heal:
And the crimson stain that was of Cain
Became Christ's snow-white seal.

VI

In Reading gaol by Reading town
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Eaten by teeth of flame,
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,
And his grave has got no name.

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,
In silence let him lie:
No need to waste the foolish tear,
Or heave the windy sigh:
The man had killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

And all men kill the thing they love,
By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS
(1865–)

THE BALLAD OF THE FOX-HUNTER [1]

"Now lay me in a cushioned chair
And carry me, you four,
With cushions here and cushions there,
To see the world once more.

And some one from the stables bring
My Dermot dear and brown,
And lead him gently in a ring,
And gently up and down.

"Now leave the chair upon the grass:
Bring hound and huntsman here,
And I on this strange road will pass,
Fill full of ancient cheer."

His eyelids droop, his head falls low,
His old eyes cloud with dreams;
The sun upon all things that grow
Pours round in sleepy streams.

Brown Dermot treads upon the lawn,
And to the armchair goes,
And now the old man's dreams are gone,
He smooths the long brown nose.

And now moves many a pleasant tongue
Upon his wasted hands,
For leading aged hounds and young
The huntsman near him stands.

"My huntsman, Rody, blow the horn,
And make the hills reply."
The huntsman loosens on the morn
A gay and wandering cry.

A fire is in the old man's eyes,
His fingers move and sway,
And when the wandering music dies
They hear him feebly say,

[1] By permission from *The Poetical Works of William B. Yeats*, copyright 1906 by The Macmillan Company.

"My huntsman, Rody, blow the horn,
And make the hills reply."
"I cannot blow upon my horn,
I can but weep and sigh."

The servants round his cushioned place
Are with new sorrow wrung;
And hounds are gazing on his face,
Both aged hounds and young.

One blind hound only lies apart
On the sun-smitten grass;
He holds deep commune with his heart:
The moments pass and pass;

The blind hound with a mournful din
Lifts slow his wintry head;
The servants bear the body in;
The hounds wail for the dead.

THE CONTEMPORARY ESSAY

The essay today is the product of all previous varieties of the type in English literature. Each of its important kinds has been fully illustrated in this volume: the moral and didactic essay of Bacon, presenting compact observations on topics which it is interesting to speculate upon, the periodical essay of Addison and Steele in which the scope is extended to include descriptive sketches of men and manners, narrative episodes in which a thoughtful, or amusing, or satirical quality is present, and discussions of many matters; the formal essay in which literary, historical, scientific, and social questions are treated with stylistic finish, as in the examples from Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, and Pater; and the familiar essay of Charles Lamb and many others in which the author converses pleasantly at his ease with the reader in a very intimate and personal way. The essay as found in contemporary literature may be any of these things, or various combinations of them.

W. H. Hudson was a naturalist and one of the greatest of recent essayists. "How I Became An Idler," from *Idle Days in Patagonia,* illustrates the out-of-door essay at its best. John Galsworthy is best known as a playwright and novelist. With a singularly judicial attitude he attacks class prejudice and the stupidity of struggles between labor and capital. He is ever the reformer. His essay called "A Commentary" is naturally cast in narrative and conversational form. Max Beerbohm is a writer with a subtle humor and a gift of caricature. The essay here printed is an amusing imitation of one of his contemporaries. G. K. Chesterton is characterized by a journalistic style and a love of paradox. He has genuine critical power. The discussion of *Martin Chuzzlewit* is a very interesting comment by one whom a certain community of spirit renders especially fitted to interpret Dickens. Lord Dunsany is the author of plays and sketches full of Celtic fancy and strange power. The essays included here are brief but vivid pictures of war at the front. W. H. Tomlinson passed from reporter to war correspondent to member of the editorial board of the London *Nation. The Sea and the Jungle,* a narrative of a South American voyage; *Old Junk,* a collection of essays on miscellaneous subjects; and *London River,* a series of essays on scenes and characters along the water-front, are his most important volumes. They reveal a distinctive note in English prose style.

It would be possible to adopt a more rigorous definition of the essay which would exclude one or more of the pieces named, but it seemed better and more in accord with present tendencies to indicate by the diversity of the following specimens the wide range and varied form of the essay of today.

W. H. HUDSON (1842–1923)

HOW I BECAME AN IDLER

If things had gone well with me, if I had spent my twelve months on the Rio Negro, as I had meant to do, watching and listening to the birds of that district, these desultory chapters, which might be described as a record of what I did not do, would never have been written. For I should have been wholly occupied with my special task, moving in a groove too full of delights to allow of its being left, even for an occasional run and taste of liberty; and seeing one class of objects too well would have made all others look distant, obscure, and of little interest. But it was not to be as I had planned it. An accident, to be described by-and-by, disabled me for a period, and the winged people could no longer be followed with secret steps to their haunts, and their actions watched through a leafy screen. Lying helpless on my back through the long sultry midsummer days, with the white-washed walls of my room for landscape and horizon, and a score or two of buzzing house-flies, perpetually engaged in their intricate airy dance, for only company, I was forced to think on a great variety of subjects, and to occupy my mind with other problems than that of migration. These other problems, too, were in many ways like the flies that shared my apartment, and yet always remained strangers to me, as I to them, since between their minds and mine a great gulf was fixed. Small unpainful riddles of the earth; flitting, sylph-like things, that began life as abstractions, and developed, like imago from maggot, into entities: I always flitting among them, as they performed their mazy dance, whirling in circles, falling and rising, poised motionless, then suddenly cannoning against me for an instant, mocking my power to grasp them, and darting off again at a tangent. Baffled I would drop out of the game, like a tired fly that goes back to his perch, but like the resting, restive fly I would soon turn towards them again; perhaps to see them all wheeling in a closer order, describing new fantastic figures, with swifter motions, their forms turned to thin black lines, crossing and recrossing in every direction, as if they had all combined to write a series of strange characters in the air, all forming a strange sentence—the secret of secrets! Happily for the progress of knowledge only a very few of these fascinating elusive insects of the brain can appear before us at the same time: as a rule we fix our attention on a single individual, like a falcon amid a flight of pigeons or a countless army of small field finches; or a dragon-fly in the thick of a cloud of mosquitoes, or infinitesimal sand-flies. Hawk and dragon-fly would starve if they tried to capture, or even regarded, more than one at a time.

I caught nothing, and found out nothing; nevertheless, these days of enforced idleness were not unhappy. And after leaving my room, hobbling round with the aid of a stout stick, and sitting in houses, I consorted with men and women, and listened day by day to the story of their small un-avian affairs, until it began to interest me. But not too keenly. I could always quit them without regret to lie on the greensward, to gaze up into the trees or the blue sky, and speculate on all imaginable things. The result was that when no longer any excuse for inaction existed use had bred a habit in me—the habit of indolence, which was quite common among the people of Patagonia, and appeared to suit the genial climate; and this habit and temper of mind I retained, with occasional slight relapses, during the whole period of my stay.

Our waking life is sometimes like a

dream, which proceeds logically enough until the stimulus of some new sensation, from without or within, throws it into temporary confusion, or suspends its action; after which it goes on again, but with fresh characters, passions, and motives, and a changed argument.

After feasting on cherries, and resting at the estancia, or farm, where we first touched the shore, we went on to the small town of El Carmen, which has existed since the last century, and is built on the side of a hill, or bluff, facing the river. On the opposite shore, where there is no cliff nor high bank, and the low level green valley extends back four or five miles to the gray barren uplands, there is another small town called La Merced. In these two settlements I spent about a fortnight, and then, in company with a young Englishman, who had been one or two years in the colony, I started for an eighty miles' ride up the river. Half way to our destination we put up at a small log hut, which my companion had himself built a year before; but finding, too late, that the ground would produce nothing, he had lately abandoned it, leaving his tools and other belongings locked up in the place.

A curious home and repository was this same little rude cabin. The interior was just roomy enough to enable a man of my height (six feet) to stand upright and swing a cat in without knocking out its brains against the upright rough-barked willow-posts that made the walls. Yet within this limited space was gathered a store of weapons, tackle, and tools, sufficient to have enabled a small colony of men to fight the wilderness and found a city of the future. My friend had an ingenious mind and an amateur's knowledge of a variety of handicrafts. The way to make him happy was to tell him that you had injured something made of iron or brass—a gun-lock, watch, or anything complicated. His eyes would shine, he would rub his hands and be all eagerness to get at the new patient to try his surgical skill on him. Now he had to give two or three days to all these wood and metal friends of his, to give a fresh edge to his chisels, and play the dentist to his saws; to spread them all out and count and stroke them lovingly, as a breeder pats his beasties, and feed and anoint them with oil to make them shine and look glad. This was preliminary to the packing for transportation, which was also a rather slow process.

Leaving my friend at his delightful task I rambled about the neighborhood taking stock of the birds. It was a dreary and desolate spot, with a few old gaunt and half-dead red willows for only trees. The reeds and rushes standing in the black stagnant pools were yellow and dead; and dead also were the tussocks of coarse tow-colored grass, while the soil beneath was white as ashes and cracked everywhere with the hot suns and long drought. Only the river close by was always cool and green and beautiful.

At length, one hot afternoon, we were sitting on our rugs on the clay floor of the hut, talking of our journey on the morrow, and of the better fare and other delights we should find at the end of the day at the house of an English settler we were going to visit. While talking I took up his revolver to examine it for the first time, and he had just begun to tell me that it was a revolver with a peculiar character of its own, and with idiosyncrasies, one of which was that the slightest touch, or even vibration of the air, would cause it to go off when on the cock—he was just telling me this, when off it went with a terrible bang and sent a conical bullet into my left knee, an inch or so beneath the knee-cap. The pain was not much, the sensation resembling that

caused by a smart blow on the knee; but on attempting to get up I fell back. I could not stand. Then the blood began to flow in a thin but continuous stream from the round symmetrical bore which seemed to go straight into the bone of the joint, and nothing that we could do would serve to stop it. Here we were in a pretty fix! Thirty-six miles from the settlement, and with no conveyance that my friend could think of except a cart at a house several miles up the river, but on the wrong side! He, however, in his anxiety to do something, imagined, or hoped, that by some means the cart might be got over the river, and so, after thoughtfully putting a can of water by my side, he left me lying on my saddle-rugs, and, after fastening the door on the outside to prevent the intrusion of unwelcome prowlers, he mounted his horse and rode away. He had promised that, with or without some wheeled thing, he would be back not long after dark. But he did not return all night; he had found a boat and boatman to transport him to the other side only to learn that his plan was impracticable, and then returning with the disappointing tidings, found no boat to recross, and so in the end was obliged to tie his horse to a bush and lie down to wait for morning.

For me night came only too soon. I had no candle, and the closed, windowless cabin was intensely dark. My wounded leg had become inflamed and pained a great deal, but the bleeding continued until the handkerchiefs we had bound round it were saturated. I was fully dressed, and as the night grew chilly I pulled my big cloth poncho, that had a soft fluffy lining, over me for warmth. I soon gave up expecting my friend, and knew that there would be no relief until morning. But I could neither doze nor think, and could only listen. From my experience during those black anxious hours I can imagine how much the sense of hearing must be to the blind and to animals that exist in dark caves. At length, about midnight, I was startled by a slight curious sound in the intense silence and darkness. It was in the cabin and close to me. I thought at first it was like the sound made by a rope drawn slowly over the clay floor. I lighted a wax match, but the sound had ceased, and I saw nothing. After awhile I heard it again, but it now seemed to be out of doors and going round the hut, and I paid little attention to it. It soon ceased, and I heard it no more. So silent and dark was it thereafter that the hut I reposed in might have been a roomy coffin in which I had been buried a hundred feet beneath the surface of the earth. Yet I was no longer alone, if I had only known it, but had now a messmate and bedfellow who had subtly crept in to share the warmth of the cloak and of my person—one with a broad arrow-shaped head, set with round lidless eyes like polished yellow pebbles, and a long smooth limbless body, strangely segmented and vaguely written all over with mystic characters in some dusky tint on an indeterminate grayish-tawny ground.

At length, about half-past three to four o'clock, a most welcome sound was heard —the familiar twittering of a pair of scissor-tail tyrant birds from a neighboring willow-tree; and after an interval, the dreamy, softly rising and falling, throaty warblings of the white-rumped swallow. A loved and beautiful bird is this, that utters his early song circling round and round in the dusky air, when the stars begin to pale; and his song, perhaps, seems sweeter than all others, because it corresponds in time to that rise in the temperature and swifter flow of the blood—the inward resurrection experienced on each morning of our individual life. Next in order the red-billed finches

begin to sing—a curious, gobbling, impetuous performance, more like a cry than a song. These are pretty reed birds, olive-green, buff-breasted, with long tails and bright red beaks. The intervals between their spasmodic bursts of sound were filled up with the fine frail melody of the small brown and gray crested song-sparrows. Last of all was heard the long, leisurely-uttered chanting cry of the brown carrion-hawk, as he flew past, and I knew that the morning was beautiful in the east. Little by little the light began to appear through the crevices, faint at first, like faintly-traced pallid lines on a black ground, then brighter and broader until I, too, had a dim twilight in the cabin.

Not until the sun was an hour up did my friend return to me hopeful still, and with all my faculties about me, but unable to move without assistance. Putting his arms around me he helped me up, and just as I had got erect on my sound leg, leaning heavily on him, out from beneath the poncho lying at my feet glided a large serpent of a venomous kind, the Craspedocephalus alternatus, called in the vernacular the *serpent with a cross*. Had my friend's arms not been occupied with sustaining me he, no doubt, would have attacked it with the first weapon that offered, and in all probability killed it, with the result that I should have suffered from a kind of vicarious remorse ever after. Fortunately it was not long in drawing its coils out of sight and danger into a hole in the wall. My hospitality had been unconscious, nor, until that moment, had I known that something had touched me, and that virtue had gone out from me; but I rejoice to think that the secret deadly creature, after lying all night with me, warming its chilly blood with my warmth, went back unbruised to its den.

Speaking of this serpent with a strange name, I recall the fact that Darwin made its acquaintance during his Patagonian rambles about sixty years ago; and in describing its fierce and hideous aspect, remarks, "I do not think I ever saw anything more ugly, excepting, perhaps, some of the vampire bats." He speaks of the great breadth of the jaws at the base, the triangular snout, and the linear pupil in the midst of the mottled coppery iris, and suggests that its ugly and horrible appearance is due to the resemblance of its face, in its shape, to the human countenance.

This idea of the ugliness or repulsiveness of an inferior animal, due to its resemblance to man in face, is not, I believe, uncommon; and I suppose that the reason that would be given for the feeling is that an animal of that kind looks like a vile copy of ourselves, or like a parody maliciously designed to mock us. It is an erroneous idea, or, at all events, is only a half-truth, as we recognize at once when we look at animals that are more or less human-like in countenance, and yet cause no repulsion. Seals may be mentioned—the mermaids and mermen of the old mariners; also the sloth with its round simple face, to which its human shape imparts a somewhat comical and pathetic look. Many monkeys seem ugly to us, but we think the lemurs beautiful, and greatly admire the marmosets, those hairy manikins with sprightly, bird-like eyes. And yet it is true that there is something human in the faces of this and perhaps of other pit-vipers, and of some vampire bats, as Darwin remarks; and that the horror they excite in us is due to this resemblance; what he failed to see was that it is the expression rather than the shape that horrifies. For in these creatures it simulates such expressions as excite fear and abhorrence in our own species, or pity so intense as to be painful—ferocity, stealthy, watchful malig-

nity, a set look of anguish or despair, or some dreadful form of insanity. Someone has well and wisely said that there is no ugliness in us except the expression of evil thoughts and passions; for these do most assuredly write themselves on the countenance. Looking at a serpent of this kind, and I have looked at many a one, the fancy is born in me that I am regarding what was once a fellow-being, perhaps one of those cruel desperate wretches I have encountered on the outskirts of civilization, who for his crimes has been changed into serpent form, and cursed with immortality.

As a rule the deceptive resemblances and self-plagiarisms of nature, when we light by chance on them, give us only pleasure, heightened by wonder or a sense of mystery; but the case of this serpent forms an exception: in spite of the tenderness I cherish towards the entire ophidian race, the sensation is not agreeable.

To return. My friend made a fire to boil water, and after we had had some breakfast, he galloped off once more in a new direction; he had at last remembered that on our side of the river there lived a settler who owned a bullock-cart, and to him he went. About ten o'clock he returned, and was shortly followed by the man with his lumbering cart drawn by a couple of bullocks. In this conveyance, suffering much from the heat and dust and joltings on the rough hard road, I was carried back to the settlement. Oxen travel slowly, and we were on the road all day and all night, and only reached our destination when the eastern sky had begun to grow bright, and the swallows from a thousand roosting-places were rising in wide circles into the still, dusky air, making it vocal with their warblings.

My miserable journey ended at the Mission House of the South American Missionary Society, in the village of the south bank of the river, facing the old town; and the change from the jolting cart to a comfortable bed was an unspeakable relief, and soon induced refreshing sleep. Later in the day, on awakening, I found myself in the hands of a gentleman who was a skilful surgeon as well as a divine, one who had extracted more bullets and mended more broken bones than surgeons who do not practise on battle-fields. My bullet, however, refused to be extracted, or even found in its hiding-place, and every morning for a fortnight I had a bad quarter of an hour, when my host would present himself in my room with a quiet smile on his lips and holding in his hands a bundle of probes—oh, those probes!—of all forms, sizes, and materials—wood, ivory, steel, and gutta-percha. These painful moments over, with no result except the reopening of a wound that wished to heal, there would be nothing more for me to do but to lie watching the flies, as I have said, and dreaming.

To conclude this vari-colored chapter, I may here remark that some of the happiest moments of my life have been occasioned by those very circumstances which one would imagine would have made me most unhappy—by grave accidents, and sickness, which have disabled and cast me a burden upon strangers; and by adversity,—

> Which, like a toad, ugly and venomous,
> Yet wears a precious jewel in its head.

Familiar words, but here newly interpreted; for this jewel which I have found —man's love for man, and the law of helpful kindness written in the heart—is worthy to be prized above all our possessions, and is most beautiful, outshining the lapidary's gems, and of so sovereign a virtue that cynicism itself grows mute and ashamed in its light.

JOHN GALSWORTHY (1867–)

A COMMENTARY[1]

The old man whose call in life was to warn the public against the dangers of the steam-roller, held a small red flag in his remaining hand, for he had lost one arm. His brown face, through whose leathery skin white bristles showed, had a certain dignity; so had his square upstanding figure. And his light gray eyes, with tiny pupils, gazed with a queer intentness, as if he saw beyond you. His clothes were old, respectable, and stained with grease; his smile shrewd and rather sweet, and his voice—of one who loved to talk, but whose profession kept him silent—was deliberate and sonorous, with a whistling lisp in it, because he had not many teeth.

"What's your opinion?" he said one summer morning. "I'll tell you *my* experience: a lot o' them that's workin' on road jobs like this are fellers that the Vestries takes on, makin' o' work for them—the lowest o' the low. You can't do nothing with them; here to-day and gone to-morrow. Lost dogs I call 'em. Most of them goes on the drink the moment they gets a chance, and the language that they'll use—oh dear! But you can't blame them's far as I can see—they're born tired. They ain't up to what's wanted of 'em nowadays. You might just as well put their 'eads under this steam-roller and 'ave done with it."

Then lowering his voice as though imparting information of a certain value, "And that's just what I think's 'appened to them already; that great thing"—he pointed to the roller—"that great thing goes on, and on, and on—it's gone over them! Life nowadays has got no more feelin' for a man than for a beetle. See the way the poor live—like pigs, crowded all together; to any one who knows, it's awful! An' morals—something dreadful! How can you have morals when you've got to live like that—let alone humanity? You can't, it stands to reason. Talk about democracy—government by the people? There's no sense in it; the people's kept like pigs; all they've got's like pig-wash thrown 'em. They know there's no hope for them. Why, when all's done, a working-man can't save enough to keep 'imself in his old age. Look at me! I've lost my arm, all my savin's was spent when I was gettin' well; I've got this job now, an' very glad to get it—but the time'll come when I'll be too old to stand about all weathers; what'll happen? I'll either 'ave to starve or go into the 'Ouse—well, that's a miserable ending for a man. But then you say, what can you do? That's just it—what *can* you do? Where's the money to come from? People say Parliament ought to find it, but I've not much 'opes of them; they're very slow. All my life I've noticed that. Very slow! Them fellers in Parliament, they've got their positions and one thing and another to consider, the same as any other people; they're bound to be cautious, they don't want to take no risks, it stands to reason. Well, that's all against reforms, I think. All they do, why it's no more than following after this 'ere roller, treadin' in the stones."

He paused, looking dubiously at the roller, now close at hand. "See what a lot o' things the money's wanted for. It's not only old-age pensions, there's illness! When I lost my arm, and lay there in the 'orspital, it worried me to think what I should do when I got out—put me in such a stew; well, there's thousands like that—people with consumption, people with bad blood—'undreds an' thousands, that's got nothin' to fall back on; they're in fear all their time."

[1] Reprinted by permission of Charles Scribner's Sons from *A Commentary*.

He came closer, and his voice seemed to whistle more than ever. "It's a dreadful thing, is fear. I thought that I'd come out a log, an' just 'ave to rot away. I've got no family—but them fellers in consumption with families an' all, it's an awful thing for them. Here's a carriage —I mustn't get to talking!"

He moved forward to the barrier, and stood there holding up his flag. A barouche and pair came sweeping up; the sun shone on its panels, on the horses' coats, the buttons of the coachman, and the egrets in two ladies' hats. It swerved at sight of the red flag, and swung round the corner to the left.

The old man stood looking after it, and the silence was broken only by the crunching of the roller. Rousing himself from reverie, he said: "Fashion! D'you know, I can't tell what them sort of people think of all day long. It puzzles me. Sometimes I fancy they don't think at all. Thinking's all done for them!" And again he seemed to lapse into his reverie. "If you told them that, they'd stare at you. Why, they fancy they're doin' an awful lot, what with their bazaars an' one thing an' another. Them sort of people, they don't mean any 'arm, but they 'aven't got the mind. You can't expect it of them, livin' their lives; you want a lot o' mind to think of other people."

Suddenly his eyes brightened. "Why, take them street-walkers you see about at night; now what d'you think ladies in their carriages thinks of them—dirt! But them women 'alf the time's no worse than what the ladies are. They took their bit o' sport, as you may call it—same as lots o' ladies take it. That's where money comes in—they 'adn't the money to keep off the streets. But what are you to do? You can't have the creatures about." A frown came on his brow, as though this question had long been troubling him.

"The rich," he went on, "are able for to educate their daughters, and look after them; I don't blame them—it's human nature to do the best you can for your own family; but you've got to think of others that haven't got your money—you've got to be human about it. The mischief is, when a man's got money, it's like a wall between 'im an' 'is fellows. That's what I've found. What's your opinion? Look here! My father was a farm laborer, at eight shillin's a week, an' brought up six of us. And 'owever 'e managed it I don't know; but I don't think things are any better than they were then—I don't —I think they're worse. This progress, or what do they call it, is destroyin' of us. You can't keep it back, no more than you could keep back that there roller if you pushed against it; all you can do's to keep ahead of it, I suppose. But talk about people's increasin' in the milk of human kindness—I don't see it, nor intelligence. Look at the way they spend their 'olidays—it gives you stomach-ache to see them. All a lot o' rowdy fellers, never still a minute, that's lost all religion —a lot o' town-bred monkeys. This 'ere modern life, it's hollowed of 'em out, that's what it's done, in my opinion. People's got so restless; they keep on tryin' first one thing and then another; anything so long as they can be doing something on their own. That's a fact. It's like a man workin' on a job like this road-mendin'; he just sees the stones he's puttin' down himself, and he don't see nothing else. That's what everybody's doin'. But I don't see how you can prevent it; it looks as if 'twas in the blood. They talk about this Socialism; well, but I'm not very sweet on it—it's mostly all a-lookin' after your neighbor, 's'far's I can see."

He paused, staring hard, as though trying to see further. "Well," he went on suddenly, "that won't work! Look at the

police—never met such meddlesome creatures; very nice men in themselves, I dare say, but just because they've got a little power—! And they're as thick as thieves together. Take these fellers that they send to prison; they talk about reformin' of them, but when they get them there it's all like that roller, crushin' the life out—awful, I call it. Them fellers come out dead, with their minds squashed out o' them; an' all done with the best intentions, so they tell me. I tell you what I think, there's only one man in a 'undred fit to 'ave power over other men put in his 'ands. Look at the workhouses—why ain't they popular? It's all because you've got to live by rule. I don't find no fault with rules so long as you don't order people about; what you want to do's to get people to keep rules of their own accord—that's what I think. But people don't look at it that way, 's'far's I can see. What's your opinion? Mind ye," he went on suddenly, "I'm not saying as there isn't lots o' things Government might do, that you'd call Socialism, I dare say. See the women in them slums—poor things, they can't hardly drag themselves along, and yet they breed like rabbits. I don't blame them, they don't know no better. But look 'ere!" and thrusting the handle of the flag into his pocket, he took a button of his listener's coat between his finger and his thumb; "I'd pass a law, I would, to stop 'em. That's going too far, you say! Well, but what's to be done? There's no other way, in my opinion. Then, of course, if you stop 'em, you won't 'ave none o' this cheap low-class labor. That won't please people. It's a difficult matter."

He sank his voice to a sort of whistling whisper. "'Alf the children in them slums is brought about under the influence of drink. What d' you make of that? And that's only the beginning—they feed them poor little things on all sorts o' mucky stuff—an' lots o' them 'alf fed at that. Pretty state o' things for a country like this—it'd disgrace the savages, I think. I'd 'ave every child full-fed by law. I'd make it a crime, I would, to 'ave half-starved children about the streets or schools, or anywhere. I'd begin at the beginning. But then you say that's pauperising of the parents. That's what they said when they began this 'ere free education—nobody ain't been pauperised by that. A country that can't keep its children fed ain't fit to 'ave them, that's what I think; 'tisn't fair to them little things. But then you say that'd cost a mint o' money—millions! Of course it would! Well, look at the 'ouses in this road, look at them big flats—'undreds an' thousands of streets an' 'ouses like that all over England. They say that sixpence on the rates would feed the children, but they won't put it on—of course they won't, it's so much off their comfort. People don't like parting; that's a fact, as you know yourself. But what's the good of raisin' millions of these 'ere dry-rotted people—they're so expensive, you can't do nothing with them—" He broke off to intercept a cart. "But I dare say," he said, returning, "they'd call that Socialism. What's your opinion? Shall I tell you what I think about it? These Socialists are like men that keep a shop, an' some one walks in an' says: 'How much for the coat there?' he says. 'Ten bob!' they say. 'I'll give you five,' he says. 'No, we wants ten,' they say. 'No,' 'e says, 'five!' And both of them knows all the time they're goin' to do a deal at seven an' six!"

He sank his voice, as though imparting a State secret: "It wouldn't never do for them to say seven an' six straight off; then 'e'd only give 'em six an' three. See? If you want to get a proper price you've got to keep hollerin' for more—that's human nature."

Then, waving his flag towards the block of flats, he said: "Look at all this class of comfortable people. They don't see things the same as I do, an' I don't know why they should. They're comfortable themselves. It stands to reason they're not goin' to think about such things. They've been brought up to believe the world was made for them. They never see no other people but their own sort; same as workin' people never see no other but workin' people. That's what makes the classes, in my opinion. All these fellers here," and he waved his hand towards the figures working at the road, "talk very big about betterin' their position, but as soon as it comes to standin' by each other it's every man for himself. It's only what you can expect—if you don't look out for yourself, nobody else will, that's as sure as eggs. They say, in England all men's equal under the law; well, but then you've only got to look around—that isn't true, how can it be? You've got to pay for law same as you've got to pay for everything. That's where it is! They talk about Justice in the country, the same for rich and poor; that's all very fine, but there's a 'undred ways where a man that's poor has to suffer for it, because he can't pull the lawyers' tails and make 'em jump."

And with these words he tried to raise both arms, but he had only one. "You haven't told me what you think?" he said: "I'll tell you my opinion," and his voice dropped to an emphatic whisper: *"There's things that want improvin,' and there's things that stand in the way of things improvin'.* But I've noticed one thing; it don't matter how low people get, they're always proud of something, even if it's only of their troubles. There must be some good in human nature, or we'd never keep ahead of that great thing at all;" he stretched his arm out to the roller, approaching with its slow crunching sound like the sound of Life crunching the bones of men; "we'd let it go right over us." And nodding his gray head twice, he stood holding up his red flag as still as stone, with his eyes fixed intently on a coming milk-cart.

MAX BEERBOHM (1872–)

A STRAIGHT TALK

By

G**RGE B*RN*RD SH*W

(*Preface to "Snt. George: A Christmas Play"*)

When a public man lays his hand on his heart and declares that his conduct needs no apology, the audience hastens to put up its umbrellas against the particularly severe downpour of apologies in store for it. I wont give the customary warning. My conduct shrieks aloud for apology, and you are in for a thorough drenching.

Flatly, I stole this play. The one valid excuse for the theft would be mental starvation. That excuse I shant plead. I could have made a dozen better plays than this out of my own head. You dont suppose Shakespeare was so vacant in the upper story that there was nothing for it but to rummage through cinquecento romances, Townley Mysteries, and such like insanitary rubbishheaps, in order that he might fish out enough scraps for his artistic fangs to fasten on. Depend on it, there were plenty of decent original notions seething behind yon marble brow. Why didn't our William use t h e m? He was too lazy. And so am I. It is easier to give a new twist to somebody else's story that you take readymade than to perform that highly-specialised form of skilled labor which consists in giving artistic coherence to a story that you have conceived roughly for yourself. A literary

gentleman once hoisted a theory that there are only thirty-six possible stories in the world. This—I say it with no deference at all—is bosh. There are as many possible stories in the world as there are microbes in the well-lined shelves of a literary gentleman's "den." On the other hand, it is perfectly true that only a baker's dozen of these have got themselves told. The reason lies in that bland, unalterable resolve to shirk honest work, by which you recognise the artist as surely as you recognise the leopard by his spots. In so far as I am an artist, I am a loafer. And if you expect me, in that line, to do anything but loaf, you will get the shock your romantic folly deserves. The only difference between me and my rivals past and present is that I have the decency to be ashamed of myself. So that if you are not too bemused and bedevilled by my "brilliancy" to kick me downstairs, you may rely on me to cheerfully lend a foot in the operation. But, while I have my share of judicial vindictiveness against crime, Im not going to talk the common judicial cant about brutality making a Better Man of the criminal. I havent the slightest doubt that I would thieve again at the earliest opportunity. Meanwhile be so good as to listen to the evidence on the present charge.

In the December after I was first cast ashore at Holyhead, I had to go down to Dorsetshire. In those days the more enterprising farm-laborers used still to annually dress themselves up in order to tickle the gentry into disbursing the money needed to supplement a local-minimum wage. They called themselves the Christmas Mummers, and performed a play entitled Snt George. As my education had been of the typical Irish kind, and the ideas on which I had been nourished were precisely the ideas that once in Tara's Hall were regarded as dangerous novelties, Snt George staggered me with the sense of being suddenly bumped up against a thing which lay centuries ahead of the time I had been born into. (Being, in point of fact, only a matter of five hundred years old, it would have the same effect to-day on the average London playgoer if it was produced in a west end theater.) The plot was simple. It is set forth in Thomas Hardy's "Return of the Native"; but, as the people who read my books have no energy left over to cope with other authors, I must supply an outline of it myself.

Entered, first of all, the English Knight, announcing his determination to fight and vanquish the Turkish Knight, a vastly superior swordsman, who promptly made mincemeat of him. After the Saracen had celebrated his victory in verse, and proclaimed himself the world's champion, entered Snt George, who, after some preliminary patriotic flourishes, promptly made mincemeat of the Saracen —to the blank amazement of an audience which included several retired army officers. Snt George, however, saved his face by the usual expedient of the victorious British general, attributing to Providence a result which by no polite stretch of casuistry could have been traced to the operations of his own brain. But here the dramatist was confronted by another difficulty: there being no curtain to ring down, how were the two corpses to be got gracefully rid of? Entered therefore the Physician, and brought them both to life. (Any one objecting to this scene on the score of romantic improbability is hereby referred to the Royal College of Physicians, or to the directors of any accredited medical journal, who will hail with delight this opportunity of proving once and for all that re-vitalisation is the child's-play of the Faculty.)

Such then is the play that I have stolen. For all the many pleasing esthetic qualities you will find in it—dramatic inven-

tiveness, humor and pathos, eloquence, elfin glamor and the like—you must bless the original author: of these things I have only the usufruct. To me the play owes nothing but the stiffening of civistic conscience that has been crammed in. Modest? Not a bit of it. It is my civistic conscience that makes a man of me and (incidentally) makes this play a masterpiece.

Nothing could have been easier for me (if I were some one else) than to perform my task in that God-rest-you-merry-gentlemen-may-nothing-you-dismay spirit which so grossly flatters the sensibilities of the average citizen by its assumption that he is sharp enough to be dismayed by what stares him in the face. Charles Dickens had lucid intervals in which he was vaguely conscious of the abuses around him; but his spasmodic efforts to expose these brought him into contact with realities so agonising to his high-strung literary nerves that he invariably sank back into debauches of unsocial optimism. Even the Swan of Avon had his glimpses of the havoc of displacement wrought by Elizabethan romanticism in the social machine which had been working with tolerable smoothness under the prosaic guidance of Henry 8. The time was out of joint; and the Swan, recognising that he was the last person to ever set it right, consoled himself by offering the world a soothing doctrine of despair. Not for m e, thank you, that Swansdown pillow. I refuse as flatly to fuddle myself in the shop of "W. Shakespeare, Druggist," as to stimulate myself with the juicy joints of "C. Dickens, Family Butcher." Of these and suchlike pernicious establishments my patronage consists in weaving round the shopdoor a barbed-wire entanglement of dialectic and then training my moral machine-guns on the customers.

In this devilish function I have, as you know, acquired by practice a tremendous technical skill; and but for the more or less innocent pride I take in showing off my accomplishment to all and sundry, I doubt whether even my iron nerves would be proof against the horrors that have impelled me to thus perfect myself. In my nonage I believed humanity could be reformed if only it were intelligently preached at for a sufficiently long period. This first fine careless rapture I could no more recapture, at my age, than I could recapture whoopingcough or nettlerash. One by one, I have flung all political nostra overboard, till there remain only dynamite and scientific breeding. My touching faith in these saves me from pessimism: I believe in the future; but this only makes the present—which I foresee as going strong for a couple of million of years or so—all the more excruciating by contrast.

For casting into dramatic form a compendium of my indictments of the present from a purely political standpoint, the old play of Snt George occurred to me as having exactly the framework I needed. In the person of the Turkish Knight I could embody that howling chaos which does duty among us for a body-politic. The English Knight would accordingly be the Liberal Party, whose efforts (whenever it is in favor with the electorate) to reduce chaos to order by emulating in foreign politics the blackguardism of a Metternich or Bismarck, and in home politics the spirited attitudinisings of a Garibaldi or Cavour, are foredoomed to the failure which its inherent oldmaidishness must always win for the Liberal Party in all undertakings whatsoever. Snt George is, of course, myself. But here my very aptitude in controversy tripped me up as playwright. Owing to my nack of going straight to the root of the matter in hand and substituting, before you can say Jack Robinson, a truth

for every fallacy and a natural law for every convention, the scene of Snt George (Bernard Shaw)'s victory over the Turkish Knight came out too short for theatrical purposes. I calculated that the play as it stood would not occupy more than five hours in performance. I therefore departed from the original scheme so far as to provide the Turkish Knight with three attendant monsters, severally named the Good, the Beyootiful, and the Ter-rew, and representing in themselves the current forms of Religion, Art, and Science. These three Snt George successively challenges, tackles, and flattens out—the first as lunacy, the second as harlotry, the third as witchcraft. But even so the play would not be long enough had I not padded a good deal of buffoonery into the scene where the five corpses are brought back to life.

The restorative Physician symbolises that irresistible force of human stupidity by which the rottenest and basest institutions are enabled to thrive in the teeth of the logic that has demolished them. Thus, for the author, the close of the play is essentially tragic. But what is death to him is fun to you, and my buffooneries wont offend any of you. Bah!

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON
(1874–)

MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT

There is a certain quality or element which broods over the whole of *Martin Chuzzlewit* to which it is difficult for either friends or foes to put a name. I think the reader who enjoys Dickens's other books has an impression that it is a kind of melancholy. There are grotesque figures of the most gorgeous kind; there are scenes that are farcical even by the standard of the farcical license of Dickens; there is humor both of the heaviest and of the lightest kind; there are two great comic personalities who run like a rich vein through the whole story, Pecksniff and Mrs. Gamp; there is one blinding patch of brilliancy, the satire on American cant; there is Todger's boarding-house; there is Bailey; there is Mr. Mould, the incomparable undertaker. But yet in spite of everything, in spite even of the undertaker, the book is sad. No one I think ever went to it in that mixed mood of a tired tenderness and a readiness to believe and laugh in which most of Dickens's novels are most enjoyed. We go for a particular novel to Dickens as we go for a particular inn. We go to the sign of the Pickwick Papers. We go to the sign of the Rudge and Raven. We go to the sign of the Old Curiosities. We go to the sign of the Two Cities. We go to each or all of them according to what kind of hospitality and what kind of happiness we require. But it is always some kind of hospitality and some kind of happiness that we require. And as in the case of inns we also remember that while there was shelter in all and food in all and some kind of fire and some kind of wine in all, yet one has left upon us an indescribable and unaccountable memory of mortality and decay, of dreariness in the rooms and even of tastelessness in the banquet. So any one who has enjoyed the stories of Dickens as they should be enjoyed has a nameless feeling that this one story is sad and almost sodden. Dickens himself had this feeling, though his breezy vanity forbade him to express it in so many words. In spite of Pecksniff, in spite of Mrs. Gamp, in spite of the yet greater Bailey, the story went lumberingly and even lifelessly; he found the sales falling off; he fancied his popularity waning, and by a sudden impulse most inartistic and

yet most artistic, he dragged in the episode of Martin's visit to America, which is the blazing jewel and the sudden redemption of the book. He wrote it at an uneasy and unhappy period of his life; when he had ceased wandering in America, but could not cease wandering altogether; when he had lost his original routine of work which was violent but regular, and had not yet settled down to the full enjoyment of his success and his later years. He poured into this book genius that might make the mountains laugh, invention that juggled with the stars. But the book was sad; and he knew it.

The just reason for this is really interesting. Yet it is one that is not easy to state without guarding one's self on the one side or the other against great misunderstandings; and the stipulations or preliminary allowances must in such a case as this of necessity be made first. Dickens was among other things a satirist, a pure satirist. I have never been able to understand why this title is always specially and sacredly reserved for Thackeray. Thackeray was a novelist; in the strict and narrow sense at any rate, Thackeray was a far greater novelist than Dickens. But Dickens certainly was the satirist. The essence of satire is that it perceives some absurdity inherent in the logic of some position, and that it draws that absurdity out and isolates it, so that all can see it. Thus for instance when Dickens says, "Lord Coodle would go out; Sir Thomas Doodle wouldn't come in; and there being no people to speak of in England except Coodle and Doodle the country has been without a Government"; when Dickens says this he suddenly pounces on and plucks out the one inherent absurdity in the English party system which is hidden behind all its paraphernalia of Parliaments and Statutes, elections and ballot papers. When all the dignity and all the patriotism and all the public interest of the English constitutional party conflict have been fully allowed for, there does remain the bold, bleak question which Dickens in substance asks, "Suppose I want somebody else who is neither Coodle nor Doodle." This is the great quality called satire; it is a kind of taunting reasonableness; and it is inseparable from a certain insane logic which is often called exaggeration. Dickens was more of a satirist than Thackeray for this simple reason: that Thackeray carried a man's principles as far as that man carried them; Dickens carried a man's principles as far as a man's principles would go. Dickens in short (as people put it) exaggerated the man and his principles; that is to say he emphasized them. Dickens drew a man's absurdity out of him; Thackeray left a man's absurdity in him. Of this last fact we can take any example we like; take for instance the comparison between the city man as treated by Thackeray in the most satiric of his novels, with the city man as treated by Dickens in one of the mildest and maturest of his. Compare the character of old Mr. Osborne in *Vanity Fair* with the character of Mr. Podsnap in *Our Mutual Friend*. In the case of Mr. Osborne there is nothing except the solid blocking in of a brutal dull convincing character. *Vanity Fair* is not a satire on the City except in so far as it happens to be true. *Vanity Fair* is not a satire on the City, in short, except in so far as the City is a satire on the City. But Mr. Podsnap is a pure satire; he is an extracting out of the City man of those purely intellectual qualities which happen to make that kind of City man a particularly exasperating fool. One might almost say that Mr. Podsnap is all Mr. Osborne's opinions separated from Mr. Osborne and turned into a character. In short the satirist is more purely phil-

osophical than the novelist. The novelist may be only an observer; the satirist must be a thinker. He must be a thinker, he must be a philosophical thinker for this simple reason; that he exercises his philosophical thought in deciding what part of his subject he is to satirize. You may have the dullest possible intelligence and be a portrait painter; but a man must have a serious intellect in order to be a caricaturist. He has to select what thing he will caricature. True satire is always of this intellectual kind; true satire is always, so to speak, a variation or fantasia upon the air of pure logic. The satirist is the man who carries men's enthusiasm further than they carry it themselves. He outstrips the most extravagant fanatic. He is years ahead of the most audacious prophet. He sees where men's detached intellect will eventually lead them, and he tells them the name of the place—which is generally hell.

Now of this detached and rational use of satire there is one great example in this book. Even *Gulliver's Travels* is hardly more reasonable than Martin Chuzzlewit's travels in the incredible land of the Americans. Before considering the humor of this description in its more exhaustive and liberal aspects, it may be first remarked that in this American part of *Martin Chuzzlewit,* Dickens quite specially sharpens up his own mere controversial and political intelligence. There are more things here than anywhere else in Dickens that partake of the nature of pamphleteering, of positive challenge, of sudden repartee, of pugnacious and exasperating query, in a word of everything that belongs to the pure art of controversy as distinct not only from the pure art of fiction but even also from the pure art of satire. I am inclined to think (to put the matter not only shortly but clumsily) that Dickens was never in all his life so strictly clever as he is in the American part of *Martin Chuzzlewit.* There are places where he was more inspired, almost in the sense of being intoxicated, as, for instance, in the Micawber feasts of *David Copperfield;* there are places where he wrote more carefully and cunningly, as, for instance, in the mystery of the *The Mystery of Edwin Drood;* there are places where he wrote very much more humanly, more close to the ground and to growing things, as in the whole of that admirable book *Great Expectations.* But I do not think that his mere abstract acuteness and rapidity of thought were ever exercised with such startling exactitude as they are in this place in *Martin Chuzzlewit.* It is to be noted, for instance, that his American experience had actually worked him up to a heat and habit of argument. A slave-owner in the Southern States tells Dickens that slave-owners do not ill-treat their slaves, that it is not to the interest of slave-owners to ill-treat their slaves. Dickens flashes back that it is not to the interest of a man to get drunk, but he does get drunk. This pugnacious atmosphere of parry and riposte must first of all be allowed for and understood in all the satiric excursus of Martin in America. Dickens is arguing all the time; and, to do him justice, arguing very well. These chapters are full not merely of exuberant satire on America in the sense that Dotheboys Hall or Mr. Bumble's Workhouse are exuberant satires on England. They are full also of sharp argument with America as if the man who wrote expected retort and was prepared with rejoinder. The rest of the book, like the rest of Dickens's books, possesses humor. This part of the book, like hardly any of Dickens's books, possesses wit. The republican gentleman who receives Martin on landing is horrified on hearing an English servant speak of the employer as "the master." "There are no masters in America," says the

gentleman. "All owners are they?" says Martin. This sort of verbal promptitude is out of the ordinary scope of Dickens; but we find it frequently in this particular part of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. Martin himself is constantly breaking out into a controversial lucidity, which is elsewhere not at all a part of his character. When they talk to him about the institutions of America he asks sarcastically whether bowie knives and swordsticks and revolvers are the institutions of America. All this (if I may summarise) is expressive of one main fact. Being a satirist means being a philosopher. Dickens was not always very philosophical; but he had this permanent quality of the philosopher about him, that he always remembered people by their opinions. Elijah Pogram was to him the man who said that "his boastful answer to the tyrant and the despot was that his bright home was the land of the settin' sun." Mr. Scadder and Mr. Jefferson Brick were to him the men who said (in coöperation) that "the libation of freedom must sometimes be quaffed in blood." And in these chapters more than anywhere else he falls into the extreme habit of satire, that of treating people as if there were nothing about them except their opinions. It is therefore difficult to accept these pages as pages in a novel, splendid as they are considered as pages in a parody. I do not dispute that men have said and do say that "the libation of freedom must sometimes be quaffed in blood," that "their bright homes are the land of the settin' sun," that "they taunt that lion," that "alone they dare him," or "that softly sleeps the calm ideal in the whispering chambers of imagination." I have read too much American journalism to deny that any of these sentences and any of these opinions may at some time or other have been uttered. I do not deny that there are such opinions. But I do deny that there are such people. Elijah Pogram had some other business in life besides defending defaulting postmasters; he must have been a son or a father or a husband or at least (admirable thought) a lover. Mr. Chollop had some moments in his existence when he was not threatening his fellow-creatures with his swordstick and his revolver. Of all this human side of such American types Dickens does not really give any hint at all. He does not suggest that the bully Chollop had even such coarse good-humor as bullies almost always have. He does not suggest that the humbug Elijah Pogram had even as much greasy amiability as humbugs almost invariably have. He is not studying them as human beings, even as bad human beings; he is studying them as conceptions, as points of view, as symbols of a state of mind with which he is in violent disagreement. To put it roughly, he is not describing characters, he is satirising fads. To put it more exactly, he is not describing characters; he is persecuting heresies. There is one thing really to be said against his American satire; it is a serious thing to be said: it is an argument, and it is true. This can be said of Martin's wanderings in America, that from the time he lands in America to the time he sets sail from it he never meets a living man. He has travelled in the land of Laputa. All the people he has met have been absurd opinions walking about. The whole art of Dickens in such passages as these consisted in one thing. It consisted in finding an opinion that had not a leg to stand on, and then giving it two legs to stand on.

So much may be allowed; it may be admitted that Dickens is in this sense the great satirist, in that he can imagine absurd opinions walking by themselves about the street. It may be admitted that Thackeray would not have allowed an absurd opinion to walk about the street

without at least tying a man on to it for the sake of safety. But while this first truth may be evident, the second truth which is the complement of it may easily be forgotten. On the one hand there was no man who could so much enjoy mere intellectual satire apart from humanity as Dickens. On the other hand there was no man who, with another and more turbulent part of his nature, demanded humanity, and demanded its supremacy over intellect, more than Dickens. To put it shortly: there never was a man so much fitted for saying that everything was wrong; and there never was a man who was so desirous of saying that everything was right. Thus, when he met men with whom he violently disagreed, he described them as devils or lunatics; he could not bear to describe them as men. If they could not think with him on essentials he could not stand the idea that they were human souls; he cast them out; he forgot them; and if he could not forget them he caricatured them. He was too emotional to regard them as anything but enemies, if they were not friends. He was too humane not to hate them. Charles Lamb said with his inimitable sleek pungency that he could read all the books there were; he excluded books that obviously were not books, as cookery books, chessboards bound so as to look like books, and all the works of modern historians and philosophers. One might say in much the same style that Dickens loved all the men in the world; that is he loved all the men whom he was able to recognise as men; the rest he turned into griffins and chimeras without any serious semblance to humanity. Even in his books he never hates a human being. If he wishes to hate him he adopts the simple expedient of making an inhuman being. Now of these two strands almost the whole of Dickens is made up; they are not only different strands, they are even antagonistic strands. I mean that the whole of Dickens is made up of the strand of satire and the strand of sentimentalism; and the strand of satire is quite unnecessarily merciless and hostile, and the strand of sentimentalism is quite unnecessarily humanitarian and even maudlin. On the proper interweaving of these two things depends the great part of Dickens's success in a novel. And by the consideration of them we can probably best arrive at the solution of the particular emotional enigma of the novel called *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

Martin Chuzzlewit is, I think, vaguely unsatisfactory to the reader, vaguely sad and heavy even to the reader who loves Dickens, because in *Martin Chuzzlewit* more than anywhere else in Dickens's works, more even than in *Oliver Twist*, there is a predominance of the harsh and hostile sort of humor over the hilarious and the humane. It is absurd to lay down any such little rules for the testing of literature. But this may be broadly said and yet with confidence: that Dickens is always at his best when he is laughing at the people whom he really admires. He is at his most humorous in writing of Mr. Pickwick, who represents passive virtue. He is at his most humorous in writing of Mr. Sam Weller, who represents active virtue. He is never so funny as when he is speaking of people in whom fun itself is a virtue, like the poor people in the Fleet or the Marshalsea. And in the stories that had immediately preceded *Martin Chuzzlewit* he had consistently concerned himself in the majority of cases with the study of such genial and honorable eccentrics; if they are lunatics they are amiable lunatics. In the last important novel before *Martin Chuzzlewit*, *Barnaby Rudge*, the hero himself is an amiable lunatic. In the novel before that, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the two comic figures, Dick Swiveller and the Mar-

chioness, are not only the most really entertaining, but also the most really sympathetic characters in the book. Before that came *Oliver Twist* (which is, I have said, an exception), and before that *Pickwick,* where the hero is, as Mr. Weller says, "an angel in gaiters." Hitherto, then, on the whole, the central Dickens character had been the man who gave to the poor many things, gold and wine and feasting and good advice; but among other things gave them a good laugh at himself. The jolly old English merchant of the Pickwick type was popular on both counts. People liked to see him throw his money in the gutter. They also liked to see him throw himself there occasionally. In both acts they recognized a common quality of virtue.

Now I think it is certainly the disadvantage of *Martin Chuzzlewit* that none of its absurd characters are thus sympathetic. There are in the book two celebrated characters who are both especially exuberant and amusing even for Dickens, and who are both especially heartless and abominable even for Dickens—I mean of course Mr. Pecksniff on the one hand and Mrs. Gamp on the other. The humor of both of them is gigantesque. Nobody will ever forget the first time he read the words "Now I should be very glad to see Mrs. Todgers's idea of a wooden leg." It is like remembering first love: there is still some sort of ancient sweetness and sting. I am afraid that, in spite of many criticisms to the contrary, I am still unable to take Mr. Pecksniff's hypocrisy seriously. He does not seem to me so much a hypocrite as a rhetorician; he reminds me of Serjeant Buzfuz. A very capable critic, Mr. Noyes, said I was wrong when I suggested in another place that Dickens must have loved Pecksniff. Mr. Noyes thinks it clear that Dickens hated Pecksniff. I cannot believe it. Hatred does indeed linger round its object as much as love; but not in that way. Dickens is always making Pecksniff say things which have a wild poetical truth about them. Hatred allows no such outbursts of original innocence. But however that may be the broad fact remains—Dickens may or may not have loved Pecksniff comically, but he did not love him seriously; he did not respect him as he certainly respected Sam Weller. The same of course is true of Mrs. Gamp. To any one who appreciates her unctuous and sumptuous conversation it is difficult indeed not to feel that it would be almost better to be killed by Mrs. Gamp than to be saved by a better nurse. But the fact remains. In this book Dickens has not allowed us to love the most absurd people seriously, and absurd people ought to be loved seriously. Pecksniff has to be amusing all the time; the instant he ceases to be laughable he becomes detestable. Pickwick can take his ease at his inn; he can be leisurely, he can be spacious; he can fall into moods of gravity and even of dulness; he is not bound to be always funny or to forfeit the reader's concern, for he is a good man, and therefore even his dulness is beautiful, just as is the dulness of the animal. We can leave Pickwick a little while by the fire to think; for the thoughts of Pickwick, even if they were to go slowly, would be full of all the things that all men care for —old friends and old inns and memory and the goodness of God. But we dare not leave Pecksniff alone for a moment. We dare not leave him thinking by the fire, for the thoughts of Pecksniff would be too frightful.

LORD DUNSANY (1878–)

SHELLS

When the aeroplanes are home and the sunset has flared away, and it is cold, and

night comes down over France, you notice the guns more than you do by day, or else they are actually more active then, I do not know which it is.

It is then as though a herd of giants, things of enormous height, came out from lairs in the earth and began to play with the hills. It is as though they picked up the tops of the hills in their hands and then let them drop rather slowly. It is exactly like hills falling. You see the flashes all along the sky, and then that lumping thump as though the top of the hill had been let drop, not all in one piece, but crumbled a little as it would drop from your hands if you were three hundred feet high and were fooling about in the night, spoiling what it had taken so long to make. That is heavy stuff bursting, a little way off.

If you are anywhere near a shell that is bursting, you can hear in it a curious metallic ring. That applies to the shells of either side, provided that you are near enough, though usually of course it is the hostile shell and not your own that you are nearest to, and so one distinguishes them. It is curious, after such a colossal event as this explosion must be in the life of a bar of steel, that anything should remain at all of the old bell-like voice of the metal, but it appears to, if you listen attentively; it is perhaps its last remonstrance before leaving its shape and going back to rust in the earth again for ages.

Another of the voices of the night is the whine the shell makes in coming; it is not unlike the cry the hyena utters as soon as it's dark in Africa: "How nice a traveler would taste," the hyena seems to say, and "I want dead White Man." It is the rising note of the shell as it comes nearer, and its dying away when it has gone over, that make it reminiscent of the hyena's method of diction. If it is not going over then it has something quite different to say. It begins the same as the other, it comes up, talking of the back areas with the same long whine as the other. I have heard old hands say "That one is going well over." "Whee-oo," says the shell; but just where the "oo" should be long drawn out and turn into the hyena's final syllable, it says something quite different. "Zarp," it says. That is bad. Those are the shells that are looking for you.

And then of course there is the whizz-bang coming from close, along his flat trajectory: he has little to say, but comes like a sudden wind, and all that he has to do is done and over at once.

And then there is the gas shell, who goes over gurgling gluttonously, probably in big herds, putting down a barrage. It is the liquid inside that gurgles before it is turned to gas by the mild explosion; that is the explanation of it; yet that does not prevent one picturing a tribe of cannibals who have winded some nice juicy men and are smacking their chops and dribbling in anticipation.

And a wonderful thing to see, even in those wonderful nights, is our thermite bursting over the heads of the Germans. The shell breaks into a shower of golden rain; one cannot judge easily at night how high from the ground it breaks, but about as high as the tops of trees seen at a hundred yards. It spreads out evenly all round and rains down slowly; it is a bad shower to be out in, and for a long time after it has fallen, the sodden grass of winter, and the mud and old bones beneath it, burn quietly in a circle. On such a night as this, and in such showers, the flying pigs will go over, which take two men to carry each of them; they go over and root right down to the German dug-out, where the German has come in out of the golden rain, and they fling it all up in the air.

These are such nights as Scheherazade with all her versatility never dreamed of;

or if such nightmares came she certainly never told of them, or her august master, the Sultan, light of the age, would have had her at once beheaded; and his people would have deemed that he did well. It has been reserved for a modern autocrat to dream such a nightmare, driven to it perhaps by the tales of a white-whiskered Scheherazade, the Lord of the Kiel Canal; and being an autocrat he has made the nightmare a reality for the world. But the nightmare is stronger than its master, and grows mightier every night; and the All-Highest War Lord, learns that there are powers in Hell that are easily summoned by the rulers of earth, but that go not easily home.

A FAMOUS MAN

Last winter a famous figure walked in Behagnies. Soldiers came to see him from their billets all down the Arras road, from Ervillers and from Sapigny, and from the ghosts of villages back from the road, places that once were villages but are only names now. They would walk three or four miles, those who could not get lorries, for his was one of those names that all men know, not such a name as a soldier or poet may win, but a name that *all* men know. They used to go there at evening.

Four miles away on the left as you went from Ervillers, the guns mumbled over the hills, low hills over which the Verys from the trenches put up their heads and peered around,—greeny, yellowy heads that turned the sky sickly, and the clouds lit up and went gray again all the night long. As you got near to Behagnies you lost sight of the Verys, but the guns mumbled on. A silly little train used to run on one's left, which used to whistle loudly, as though it asked to be shelled, but I never saw a shell coming its way; perhaps it knew that the German gunners could not calculate how slow it went. It crossed the road as you got down to Behagnies.

You passed the graves of two or three German soldiers with their names on white wooden crosses,—men killed in 1914; and then a little cemetery of a French cavalry regiment, where a big cross stood in the middle with a wreath and a tricolor badge, and the names of the men. And then one saw trees. That was always a wonder, whether one saw their dark shapes in the evening, or whether one saw them by day, and knew from the look of their leaves whether autumn had come yet, or gone. In winter at evening one just saw the black bulk of them, but that was no less marvellous than seeing them green in summer; trees by the side of the Arras-Bapaume road, trees in mid-desert in the awful region of Somme. There were not many of them, just a cluster, fewer than the date palms in an oasis in Sahara, but an oasis is an oasis wherever you find it, and a few trees make it. There are little places here and there, few enough as the Arabs know, that the Sahara's deadly sand has never been able to devastate; and there are places even in the Somme that German malice, obeying the Kaiser as the sand of Sahara obeys the accursed sirocco, has not been able to destroy quite to the uttermost. That little cluster of trees at Behagnies is one of these; Divisional Headquarters used to shelter beneath them; and near them was a statue on a lawn which probably stood by the windows of some fine house, though there is no trace of the house but the lawn and that statue now.

And over the way on the left a little further on, just past the officers' club, a large hall stood where one saw that famous figure, whom officers and men alike would come far to see.

The hall would hold perhaps four or five hundred seats in front of a stage fitted up very simply with red, white and

blue cloths, but fitted up by some one that understood the job; and at the back of that stage on those winter evenings walked on his flat and world-renowned feet the figure of Charlie Chaplin.

When aeroplanes came over bombing, the dynamos used to stop for they supplied light to other places besides the cinema, and the shade of Charlie Chaplin would fade away. But the men would wait till the aeroplanes had gone and that famous figure came waddling back to the screen. There he amused tired men newly come from the trenches, there he brought laughter to most of the twelve days that they had out of the line.

He is gone from Behagnies now. He did not march in the retreat a little apart from the troops, with head bent forward and hand thrust in jacket, a flat-footed Napoleon: yet he is gone; for no one would have left behind for the enemy so precious a thing as a Charlie Chaplin film. He is gone but he will return. He will come with his cane one day along that Arras road to the old hut in Behagnies; and men dressed in brown will welcome him there again.

He will pass beyond it through those desolate plains, and over the hills beyond them, beyond Bapaume. Far hamlets to the east will know his antics.

And one day surely, in old familiar garb, without court dress, without removing his hat, armed with that flexible cane, he will walk over the faces of the Prussian Guard and, picking up the Kaiser by the collar, with infinite nonchalance in finger and thumb, will place him neatly in a prone position and solemnly sit on his chest.

H. M. TOMLINSON (1873–)

IN A COFFEE-SHOP

With a day of rain, Dockland is set in its appropriate element. It does not then look better than before, but it looks what it is. Not sudden April showers are meant, sparkling and revivifying, but a drizzle, thin and eternal, as if the rain were no more than the shadow cast by a sky as unchanging as poverty. When real night comes, then the street lamps dissolve ochreous hollows in the murk. It was such a day as that; it was not night, for the street lamps were not alight. There was no sound. The rain was as noiseless as the passage of time. Two other wayfarers were in the street with me. One had no right there, nor anywhere, and knew it, slinking along with his head and tail held low, trailing a length of string through the puddles. The other, too, seemed lost. He was idling as if one street was the same as another, and on that day there was rain in all. He came towards me, with his hands in his pockets and his coat collar up. He turned on me briskly, with a sudden decision, when he drew level. Water dripped from the peak of his cap, and his clothes were heavy and dark with it. He spoke. "Mister, could ye give me a hand up? I've made a mess of it." His cheerful and rather insolent assurance faltered for a moment. He then mumbled: "I've been on the booze y'understand." But there was still something in his tone which suggested that any good man might have done the same thing.

It is not easy to be even sententious with the sinful when an open confession robs us of our moral prerogative, so I only told him that it seemed likely booze had something to do with it. His age could have been forty; but it was not easy to judge, for the bridge of his nose was a livid depression. Some accident had pushed in his face under the eyes, giving him the battered aspect of ancient sin. His sinister appearance would have frightened any timid lady if he had stopped her in such a street, on such a

day, with nobody about but a lost dog, and the houses, it could be supposed, deserted, or their inmates secluded in an abandonment to misery. And, taking another glance at him, I thought it probable, from the frank regard of the blue and frivolous eye which met mine, that he would have recognized timidity in a lady at a distance, and would have passed her without seeing her. Uncertain whether his guess in stopping me was lucky, he began pulling nervously at a bleached moustache. His paw was the color of leather. Its nails were broken and stained with tar.

"Can't you get work?" I suggested. "Why don't you go to sea?"

This deliberately unfair question shook his upright confidence in himself, and perhaps convinced him that he had, after all, stopped a fool. He took his cap off, and flung a shower from it—it had been draining into his moustache—and asked whether I did not think he looked poor enough for a sailor.

Then I heard how he came to be there. Two days before he had signed the articles of the steamship *Bilbao*. His box had gone aboard, and that contained all his estate. The skipper, to be sure of his man, had taken care of his discharge book, and so was in possession of the only proof of his identity. Then he left the shipping office, and met some friends.

Those friends! "That was a fine girl," he said, speaking more to the rain than to me. "I never seen a finer." I began to show signs of moving away. "Don't go, mister. She was all right. I lay you never seen a finer. Look here. I reckon you know her." He plunged an eager hand into an inner pocket. "Ever heard of Angel Light? She's on the stage. It's a fact. She showed me her name herself on a programme last night. There y'are." He triumphed with a photograph, and his gnarled forefinger pointed at an exposed set of teeth under an extraordinary hat. "Eh, ain't that all right? On the stage, too. Met her at the corner of Pennyfields."

It was still raining. He flung another shower from his cap. I was impatient, but he took my lapel confidentially. "Guv'nor," he said, "if I could find the swab as took my money, I lay I'd make him look so as his own mother 'ud turn her back on him. I would. Ten quid."

He had, it appeared, lost those friends. He was now seeking, with varying emotions, both the girl and the swab. I suggested the dock and his ship would be a better quest. No, it was no good, he said. He tried that late last night. Both had gone. The policeman at the gate told him so. The dock was there again this morning, but a different policeman; and whatever improbable world the dock and the policeman of midnight had visited, there they had left his ship, inaccessible, tangled hopelessly in a revolving mesh of saloon lights and collapsing streets. Now he had no name, no history, no character, no money, and he was hungry.

We went into a coffee-shop. It stands at the corner of the street which is opposite the *Steam Packet* beerhouse. You may recognize the place, for it is marked conspicuously as a good pull-up for carmen, though then the carmen were taking their vans steadily past it. The buildings of a shipwright's yard stand above it, and the hammers of the yard beat with a continuous rhythmic clangor which recedes, when you are used to it, till it is only the normal pulse of life in your ears. The time was three in the afternoon. The children were at school, and alone the men of the iron-yard made audible the unseen life of the place. We had the coffee-shop to ourselves. On the counter a jam roll was derelict. Some crumpled and greasy newspapers sprawled on the benches. The outcast squeezed into a corner of a

bench, and a stout and elderly matron appeared, drying her bare arms on her apron, and looked at us with annoyance. My friend seized her hand, patted it, and addressed her in terms of extravagant endearment. She spoke to him about that. But food came; and as he ate—how he ate!—I waited, looking into my own mug of tepid brown slop at twopence the pint. There was a racing calendar punctuated with dead flies, and a picture in the dark by the side of the door of Lord Beaconsfield, with its motto: "For God, King, and Country"; and there was a smell which comes of long years of herrings cooked on a gas grill. At last the hungry child had finished scraping his plate and wiping his moustache with his hands. He brought out a briar pipe, and a pouch of hairy skin, and faded behind a blue cloud. From behind the cloud he spoke at large, like a confident disreputable Jove who had been skylarking for years with the little planet Earth.

At a point in his familiar reminiscences my dwindling interest vanished, and I noticed again, through the window, the house fronts of the place I knew once, when Poplar was salt. The lost sailor himself was insignificant. What was he? A deck hand; one who tarred iron, and could take a trick at the wheel when some one was watching him. The place outside might have been any dismal neighborhood of London. Its character had gone. The tap-tapping on iron plates in the yard next door showed where we were today. The sailor was silent for a time, and we listened together to the sound of rivets going home. "That's right," said the outcast. "Make them bite. Good luck to the rivets. What yard is that?" I told him.

"What? I didn't know it was about here. That place! Well, it's a good yard, that. They're all right. I was on a steamer that went in there, one trip. She wanted it, too. You could put a chisel through her. But they only put in what they were paid for, not what she wanted. The old *Starlight*. She wouldn't have gone in then but for a bump she got. Do you know old Jackson? Lives in Foochow Street round about here somewhere. He's lived next to that pub in Foochow Street for years and years. He was the old man of the *Starlight*. He's a sailor all right, is Jackson.

"That last trip I had with him was ten months ago. The *Starlight* came in here to the West Dock with timber. She had to go into dry-dock, and I signed on for her again when she was ready. This used to be my home, Poplar, before I married that Cardiff woman. Do you know Poplar at all? Poplar's all right. We went over to Rotterdam for something or other, but sailed from there light, for Fowey. We loaded about three thousand tons of china clay for Baltimore.

"The sea got up when we were abreast of the Wolf that night, and she was a wet ship. 'We're running into it,' said old Jackson to the mate. I was at the wheel. 'Look out, and call me if I'm wanted.' "

The man pushed his plate away, and leaned towards me, elbows on the table, putting close his flat and brutish face, with his wet hair plastered over all the brow he had. He appeared to be a little drowsy with food. "Ever crossed the Western ocean in winter? Sometimes there's nothing in it. But when it's bad there's no word for it. There was our old bitch, filling up for'ard every time she dropped, and rolling enough to shift the boilers. We reckoned something was coming all right. Then when it began to blow, from dead ahead, the old man wouldn't ease her. That was like old Jackson. It makes you think of your comfortable little home, watching them big gray-backs running by your ship, and no hot grub because the galley's flooded.

The Wolf was only two days behind us, and we had all the way to go. It was lively, guv'nor. The third night I was in with the cook helping him to get something for the men. They'd been roping her hatches. The covers were beginning to come adrift, y'understand. The cook, he was slipping about, grousing all round. Then she stopped dead, and the lights went out. Something swept right over us with a hell of a rush, and I felt the deck give under my feet. The galley filled with water. 'Christ, she's done,' shouted the cook.

"We scrambled out. It was too dark to see anything, but we could hear the old man shouting. The engines had stopped. I fell over some wreckage." The sailor stroked his nose. "This is what it did.

"Next morning you wouldn't have known the old *Starlight*. All her boats had gone, and she had a list to port like a roof. You wanted to be a bird to get about her. The crowd looked blue enough when they saw the falls flying around at daylight, and only bits of boats. It was a case. Every time she lay down in the trough, and a sea went over her solid, we watched her come up again. She took her time about it.

"The engineers were at it below, trying to get her clear. They had the donkey going. In the afternoon we sighted a steamer's smoke to westward. She bore down on us. I never seen anything I liked better than that. Then the Chief came up, and I saw him talking to the old man. The old man climbed round to us. 'Now, lads,' he said, 'there's a Cunarder coming. But the engineer says he reckons he's getting her clear of water. What about it? Shall I signal the liner, or will you stand by her?'

"We let the Cunarder go. I watched her out of sight. We hung around, and just about sunset the Chief came up again. I heard what he said. 'It's overhauling us fast, sir,' he said to the old man. The old man, he stood looking down at the deck. Nobody said anything for a spell. Then a fireman shot through a companion on all fours, scrambled to the bulwarks, and looked out. He began cursing the sun, shaking his fist at it every time it popped over the seas. It was low down. It was funny to hear him. 'So long, chaps,' he said, and dropped overside.

"We waited all night. I couldn't sleep, what with the noise of the seas running over us, and waiting for something to happen. It was perishing cold, too. At sun-up I could see she might pitch under at any time. She was about awash. The old man came to me and the steward, and said: 'Give the men all the gin they'll drink. Fill 'em up.' Some of 'em took it. I never knew a ship take such a hell of a time to sink as that one.

"I sighted the steamer, right ahead, and we wondered whether the iron under us would wait till she come. We counted every roller that went over us. The other steamer was a slow ship all right. But she came up, and put out her boats. We had to lower the drunks into them. I left in the last boat with the old man. 'Jim,' he said, looking at her as we left her, 'she's got no more than five minutes now. I just felt her drop. Something's given away.' Before we got to the other ship we saw the *Starlight's* propeller in the air. Right on end. Yes. I never seen anything like that—and then she just went . . ."

The sailor made a grimace at me and nodded. From the shipwright's next door the steady, continuous hammering in the dry-dock was heard again, as though it had been waiting, and were now continuing the yarn.

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